Stages of Captivity:
Napoleonic Prisoners of War & their Theatricals, 1808-1814

by

Devon Cox

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

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I have not modernized French or Spanish spellings in quotations. All quoted texts retain the original spellings. All translations are my own except where otherwise indicated.

Abstract

In 2011, the Performance and Theatre Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London acquired an archive of materials relating to the French prisoners of war held at Portchester Castle from 1810 to 1814. This archive consisted of scripts, playbills, and abstracts from the prisoners' Théâtre des Variétés built and operated in the basement of the castle's keep. These materials have provided new and unique insights into the experiences of Napoleonic prisoners of war and have served as a catalyst for this first major critical study of Napoleonic prisoners-of-war theatricals. The majority of the theatre's *sociétaires* were captured in the French defeat at the Battle of Bailen in July 1808. This study will be charting the journey of these French prisoners through their captivity in Spain, the Baeleric Islands, and Britain. While this particular group of prisoners has been the subject of previous historic surveys, their theatrical endeavours have been sidelined or relegated to footnotes or dismissed as a way to pass the time. In this study I will draw the prisoners' theatricals to the centre of critical discussion examining their repertoire in greater detail underlining the vital role that theatre served in the prisoners' emotional and psychological survival in captivity.

List of Abbreviations:

ADM	Admiralty Papers, TNA
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris/Pierrefitte
AHN	Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid
APM	Archivo Municipal de Palma de Majorca
BL	British Library, London
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BO	Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, Paris
FO	Foreign Office papers
NAS	National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NLS	National Library, Scotland
NMM	National Maritime Museum, London
PoW	Prisoner of war
SHD	Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes (Paris)
TNA	National Archives, Kew (London)
TO	Transport Office/Transport Board
V&A	Victoria & Albert Museum

Introduction

On 19 July 1808, approximately 17,500 soldiers in Napoleon's Grande Armée were taken prisoner following a humiliating defeat at the Battle of Bailen in Andalucia at the outset of the Peninsular Wars (1808 to 1814).[1] The vast majority of these prisoners would not see freedom again until May 1814.[2] From the battlefield of Bailen, the French prisoners were marched to Seville, and in November 1808, as Napoleon advanced from France toward Madrid, the prisoners were marched further south to the port city of Cadiz on the southern coast of Spain. There the prisoners were loaded onto crowded prison hulks and held captive in the fetid salt marshes of the Isla de Leon. In March 1809, with Cadiz under threat from rioting locals, and French troops advancing quickly across Spain, more than half of these prisoners were transported to the remote, uninhabited Balearic island of Cabrera, approximately ten kilometres southwest of Majorca.[3] Finally, in July 1810, the British Admiralty allowed the French officers and sub-officers to be transported to England. Upon arriving in England, the French officers were dispersed to various parole towns across Great Britain while the sub-officers remained imprisoned at the ancient Roman fortress of Portchester Castle in Portsmouth Harbour.

From the Isla de Leon to Cabrera to Portchester Castle, the prisoners faced harsh and inhumane conditions—malnutrition, inhospitable weather, mob violence, and lack of clothing and shelter, not to mention crippling ennui, homesickness and depression. In the face of such gruelling conditions, however, these prisoners mustered their efforts to create theatrical entertainments in each of the three locations, and in parole towns across Great Britain. From a variety of sources including first-hand memoirs and documented evidence such as playbills, letters, abstracts, and hand-written scripts, we know that the prisoners

[1] Michael Glover gives a total number of 17,635 unwounded men who became prisoners of the Spanish. Glover also points out that the surrender at Bailen was the worst disaster suffered by the French army since the turn of the century. See Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War, 1807-1814: A Concise Military History* (London: David and Charles, 1974), p. 54.

[2] Surviving prisoners in Spain would not return to France until July 1814 when Spain signed the Treaty of Paris thus establishing peace with France.

[3] Naval prisoners were sent to the Canary Islands.

adapted to the widely varying availability of resources and performance spaces to produce theatricals and stage plays that were also highly successful in Paris in the 1790s and early 1800s. The sheer ambition and scale of their theatricals along with their eagerness and persistence to perform in even the most remote and desolate environments suggests that theatre held a more profound significance in the lives of the prisoners of war than has previously been acknowledged.

The prisoners of the Battle of Bailen have been the subject of several historical surveys in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and yet the prisoners' theatricals remain a peripheral event in the narrative of their captivity.[4] In 1934, Swiss historian, Théophile Geisendorf-des-Gouttes, conducted one of the first major studies of the prisoners of Bailen.[5] Drawing upon documented correspondence as well as prisoners' memoirs, Geisendorf has given a thorough examination of the conditions and treatment of the prisoners of war along with the complex political wranglings that took place between the British and Spanish authorities in charge of prisoners' care and protection.

In 2001, Denis Smith published a study of the prisoners of Cabrera based largely on Geisendorf's earlier findings.[6] Smith presents the rightful case that his biography is re-examining the terrible existence of a group of prisoners whose story had been lost and whose 'treatment remained an indistinct and disquieting memory, a peripheral incident in a long and vicious campaign, an embarrassment more conveniently ignored than recalled'.[7] While Smith's biography rightly draws needed attention to the plight of the prisoners of war on Cabrera, like Geisendorf, there remain several critical gaps.

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[4] For prisoners in Britain: Francis Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815: A Record of their Lives, their Romance and their Sufferings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914); Paul Chamberlain, *Hell Upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain, 1793-1815* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2008). For prisoners of Cabrera: Pedro Estelrich, *La isla de Cabrera* (Palma de Mallorca: Rotger, 1907) and Miguel de los Santos Oliver, *Mallorca durante la primera revolución, 1808-1814* (Palma: Luis Ripoll, 1982 [1901])

[5] Théophile Geisendorf-des-Gouttes, *Les Archipels enchanteurs et farouches: Baléares et Canaries: Cabrera, l'île tragique* (Geneva: Labor, 1934).

[6] Denis Smith, *The Prisoners of Cabrera: Napoleon's Forgotten Soldiers: 1809-1814* (New York; London: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2001).

[7] Smith, p. xvi.

First, both Smith and Geisendorf only present a part of the entire picture of the prisoners' captivity. Both focus on the events of the Battle of Bailen, the prisoners' captivity on the *pontons* at the Isla de Leon and on Cabrera. However, neither explores the crucial reality that a significant portion of these prisoners eventually come to England and thus their histories negate an entire four years of their captivity. These histories may draw due attention to the plight of the French prisoners, but this singular approach removes the prisoners from the larger context thus distorting the transient nature of their existence in captivity, and diluting the sense of helplessness and lack of control at being shuffled from one locale to another over a course of six years from 1808 to 1814.

In 2013, Spanish historian, Vincente Ruiz García partially addressed this problem, completing a more comprehensive history following the prisoners through all three stages of captivity—the Isla de Leon, Cabrera, and Portchester Castle.[8] While Geisendorf, Smith, and García all present meticulous and well-documented accounts of the administration, experiences, and political/historical contexts relating to the prisoners from Bailen, in most cases, the prisoners' theatricals have been breezed over, swept off into the footnotes, or ignored entirely. In the few instances the theatricals are mentioned they are presented as uncritical accounts taken directly from prisoners' memoirs without any further critical reflection or interrogation of the evidence. None of these previous histories has provided any meaningful analysis of the repertoire, or explanation of how the theatricals might have enabled the prisoners' emotional and psychological survival in captivity.

These historians are not the only ones to overlook the prisoners' theatricals. Portchester Castle has been treated in Barry Cunliffe's extensive archaeological excavations.[9] While his report does look at the castle's Norman

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[8] Vincente Ruiz García, *Los pontones de Cadiz y la odisea de los soldados derrotados en la batalia de Bailen, 1808-1814* (Bailen, ES: Asociación Historiador 'Jesus de Haro Malpesa', 2013). García has a useful chapter on the selection of prisoners of Bailen that were sent to the Canary Islands.

[9] Barry Cunliffe, et. al., 'Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume V: Post Medieval 1609–1819', *Society of Antiquaries Research Report 52* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1994). The archaeological investigations on Cabrera discuss the theatricals but provide no speculation on how the theatricals might have been staged on the hillside

keep, his findings do not provide any archaeological information whatsoever about the basement theatre of the castle's keep where the prisoners built a fully-functioning theatre with stage equipment and machinery. Cunliffe's report provides no archaeological explanation pertaining to the layout or structure of the theatre spaces in the castle's keep, let alone any informed speculation pertaining to the theatre mechanics, logistics or equipment, despite the fact that the space remains more or less intact, and the theatricals are vividly recorded by various memoirists.[10]

The prisoners' theatricals appear to be consistently brushed aside or dismissed as unworthy of critical investigation or overlooked as mere amusement for bored prisoners wishing to fill their time in captivity. In his history of the Napoleonic French and American prisoners of war at Dartmoor Prison, Trevor James acknowledges that 'theatricals were a prominent feature of prison life' but then provides absolutely no other information about them.[11] Another historian of French and American prisoners of war in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars explains their theatricals in the most simplistic terms: 'Whenever great numbers of men are plucked from their natural environment and herded together in time of war […] there will always be found some with sufficient enthusiasm and organising ability who will get together to arrange entertainment of their fellows'.[12] While 'enthusiasm' and 'organising ability' are no doubt essential components of these theatricals, this explanation negates the deeper emotional, psychological, and cultural factors underlying their endeavours, and crucially downplays the role that theatre served in the survival of these prisoners of war.

In their study of cultural heritage in conflicts of the twentieth century published in 2012, Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum argue that prisoner-of-war creativity is 'more than just a way to pass the tedium of interned life',

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cave. See Pep Amengual and Miquel Frontera, eds, *Oblidats a Cabrera: el captiveri Napoleonic, 1809-1814* (Palma: Promomallorca Edicions S. L., 2009-2010).

[10] If there was in fact stage machinery as several memoirists indicate, there was likely to be some archaeological evidence remaining.

[11] Trevor James, *Prisoners of War at Dartmoor: American and French Soldiers and Sailors in an English Prison during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2013), p. 117.

[12] Clive Lloyd, *Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War, 1756-1816* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007), p. 282.

demonstrating that in most instances it serves as 'a therapeutic outlet which enables [the prisoners] to survive emotionally, psychologically and, in some cases, physically'.[13] A recent study of trauma in the Holocaust found that theatre enabled victims of intense psychological trauma 'to convert potentially traumatizing experiences into manageable narratives and thus enhanced their ability to cope with the conditions of their captivity'.[14] Theatre provided a space for victims or captives to process and assimilate the trauma of their captivity in a variety of different ways that will be explored in Chapter 4.

Working with a group of young survivors from the Balkan Wars aged 16 to 25 (roughly the same age as many of the prisoners from the Battle of Bailen), Sonja Kuftnic found that theatre provided 'a way to 'deal more effectively' with past events through metaphorical means'.[15] Kuftnic found that the theatre in the prison camp served as an 'in-between space of no-longer-home and not-yet-elsewhere', where prisoners could create familiar performances 'that worked to navigate nostalgia and contain trauma, striving to generate new narratives of belonging and modes of being'.[16] For Kuftnic, theatre provided a safe space for prisoners to negotiate the trauma of the present by exercising memories of the past. Similarly, Victor Emaljenow's studies of British prisoner-of-war theatricals in World War I and II, argue that theatre served as a critical mode of survival in German prison camps by connecting prisoners to a pre-captive past with its 'patina of certainty'.[17] In addition to providing a necessary distraction from the 'destabilization and derealization' of imprisonment, Emaljenow argues that theatre served as a vital link to memories of a happier, more stable past that

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[13] Carr and Mytum, *Cultural Heritage,* p. 2.
[14] Lisa Peschel, 'The Cultural Life of the Terezín Ghetto in 1960s Survivor Testimony: Theatre, Trauma and Resilience' in *Performing (for) Survival: Theatre, Crisis, Extremity,* ed. Patrick Duggan and Lisa Peschel (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 59-77 (p. 62).
[15] Sonja Arsham Kuftinec, *Theatre, Facilitation and Nation Formation in the Balkans and Middle East* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 40.
[16] Kuftinec, p. 40.
[17] Victor Emeljanow, 'Palliative Pantomimes: Entertainments in Prisoner-of-War Camps', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914 – 1919,* ed. Andrew Maunder (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 269-86; Victor Emeljanow, 'Popular Entertainments as Survival Strategies in Prisoner-of-War Camps During World War II', in *Trauma and Public Memory*, ed. Christopher Lee and Jane Goodall (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 174-92.

proved 'decisive in the struggle for survival when soldiers found themselves uprooted and placed in a world where the future appeared to have no meaning'.[18] Although separated by different historical and cultural contexts, a similar phenomenon can be seen in the experience of Napoleonic prisoners of war where, as I will demonstrate in due course, the prisoners' used theatre as a link to the past to cope with the trauma they experienced as a result of their captivity.

In 2010, the Victoria and Albert Museum's Performance and Theatre Collection acquired an important archive of theatrical materials relating to the French prisoners of war at Portchester Castle that had remained in private ownership for nearly two hundred years. The archive includes approximately 17 playbills for performances between 21 September to 5 January 1811 along with one full-length script for a three-act melodrama, *Roséliska*, written by French prisoners, Jean Lafontaine and François Mouillefarine along with over a dozen shorter vaudeville pieces. The availability of this archive opens the opportunity for a fresh and unique new perspective into the experiences of Napoleonic prisoners of war that in turn opens useful discussions about theatre and cultural exchange in the early nineteenth century.

There are significant in-roads being made in prisoner-of-war studies encompassing a vast array of methodologies, from political to gender and race studies, and across a variety of spaces from the local to the global.[19] The field is gradually becoming more interdisciplinary, gathering together researchers in sociology, law, psychology, archaeology, medicine along with studies of music, theatre, and life-writing.[20] Utilising previously untapped sources, this study aims to provide a significant contribution to this conceptually vibrant and innovative field by drawing the prisoners' theatricals from the margins of history to the

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[18] Emeljanow, 'Palliative Pantomimes', p. 273.

[19] Anne-Marie Pathé and Fabien Théofilakis, *La Captivité de Guerre au XXe Siècle: des Archives, des Histoires, des Mémoires* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012); Sibylle Scheipers, *Prisoners in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Neville Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy: Britain, Germany, and the Politics of Prisoners of War, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[20] Gilly Carr, and Harold Mytum, eds, *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment* (London: Springer, 2013); Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum, eds, *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (London: Routledge, 2012).

centre demonstrating that theatre and performance were more than simply a means of passing the time, but was actually a vital component to the prisoners' survival. Focusing on the prisoners' captivity through the lens of theatre history will allow me to bridge critical gaps in scholarship left by previous historians in three specific ways.

First, this study will document the prisoners' entire journey from capture to release. This approach will not only provide a more accurate picture of their captivity, but will also allow us to compare and analyse differences in repertoire at each prison depot. A chronological juxtaposition of theatricals in each depot will reveal that the repertoire is strongly linked to the availability of resources as well as to the prisoners' own interactions in the local 'captivity zone'. By focusing the critical lens on the theatricals I will not only be able to magnify specific details that have been crucially overlooked or misread by previous studies, I will also be able to interrogate evidence in a way that has not been done before. The first step will be to establish a clear picture of the prisoners' repertoire. While previous studies have taken prisoners' first-hand memoirs at face-value, newly available documentary evidence allows me to cross-reference and challenge these memoirs to develop a clearer picture of the plays the prisoners were performing. Once I have established the prisoners' repertoire, I will then be able to provide a much-needed analysis of the texts drawing out recurring themes of judgement, resurrection, and escape that in turn shows us that the prisoners are using theatre to assimilate the trauma of captivity, manifesting their hopes, desires, and fears on stage.

In addition to analysing repertoire, I will also attempt to fill in gaps left by previous archaeological investigations. While the military hospital at the Isla de Leon was destroyed in the 1970s, the performance spaces at both Cabrera and Portchester Castle remain intact. Using first-hand accounts, archival materials, dramaturgical analysis of texts, and, where possible, the surviving performance spaces themselves, I will re-evaluate the material conditions of the theatricals, which as we will see, largely dictate the prisoners' repertoire.

One of the primary aims of this study is to show that the prisoners' theatricals were much more than a means of merely passing time in captivity,

and that it was in fact a vital mechanism for survival. Drawing upon recent scholarship on theatre and trauma I will be syncretising several critical disciplines—military history, theatre history, and psycholoanalysis—to illustrate how theatre served as a survival mechanism in the horrific conditions of captivity. We will see that theatre served as a mode of surivial in a number of ways. From the descriptions of the theatricals in the prisoners' memoirs, it becomes clear that theatre served to reconnect the prisoners with home. For instance, we are told that the prisoners' were performing 'les ouvrages les plus nouveaux et les plus en vogue' ['the newest and most fashionable plays'] from the Paris stage.[21] Additionally, we see that the prisoners decorated their theatres with 'souvenirs' ['memories'] of Paris and 'des principaux monumens de la France' ['the principle monuments of France'].[22] Both text/genre and physical staging combine to reconnect the prisoners with home.

Providing a conduit for channeling nostalgic sentiments of home was only one of the many functions that theatre appears to serve in the prisoners' captivity. Looking more broadly at genre we find a strong preference for comedy and melodrama. Much has been written on the positive effects of laughter, humour and comedy in coping with traumatic situations. In the gruelling conditions of captivity we will see that humour served a number of functions in providing a sense of shared community values, while at the same time providing an opportunity to mock their captors. In addition to comedy, there is strong evidence that melodrama was the most popular genre performed at Portchester Castle. While melodrama was one of the most popular genres of the boulevard theatres in Paris in the early 1800s, I will demonstrate that it also provided a unique worldview that assisted in coping with the trauma of captivity.

Another important facet of this study will be to re-examine interactions between French prisoners and local British communities nuancing existing paradigms of British and French national identity development in the early

[21] Philippe Gille, *Mémoires d'un conscrit de 1808: les prisonniers de Cabrera*, 3rd edn (Paris: Victor-Havard, 1892), p. 270.
[22] Henri Ducor, *Aventures d'un marin de la Garde Imperiale, prisonnier de guerre sur les pontons espagnols, dans l'île de Cabrèra, et en Russie*, 2 volumes (Paris: Ambroise Dupont, 1833), p. 139.

nineteenth century. The years between the collapse of the Peace of Amiens in 1803 and the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 witnessed global warfare across the entire European Continent from Russia to the Iberian Penninsula, North America, the Caribbean and North Africa. These years saw millions killed and displaced. In total, there were an estimated half-million prisoners of war captured during the period.[23] Until the 1960s, scholarship on the period tended to focus largely upon military campaigns and strategies in so-called 'battle books' or biographies of famous generals or other military personnel.

From the 1990s onwards, two major interconnected historical models point to the enormous shifts in warfare during this crucial period, and its wider cultural implications. Linda Colley has argued that this period saw a Britishness forged against the perennial Gallic 'other' while David Bell has theorized that the period experienced the culmination of a total war.[24] In *The First Total War*, Bell made the compelling argument that western attitudes towards war underwent major transformations between the mid-eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth. With the Napoleonic era, wars became 'entirely apart from the course of history', 'a war involving the complete mobilisation of society's resources to achieve the absolute destruction of an enemy, with all distinction erased between combatants and non-combatants'.[25] This resulted in the enforcement of military values upon civilians, as exemplified by the Napoleonic regime, and the professionalization of armed forces.[26] Moreover, it implies that warfare, and national identity, were no longer confined to the

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[23] See Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: An International History: 1803-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), pp. 1-15.

[24] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).

[25] Bell, *The First Total War*, p. 6-7, 11. This theory had been burgeoning since the 1960s, as an attempt to trace the precursors of the brutalising and all-encompassing international conflicts of the twentieth century. Jean-Yves Guiomar developed a similar argument by emphasizing the fusion of politics and war as characteristic of a 'modern' military culture in Europe, where radically opposed ideologies collided, buttressed by a demonization of the opponent as an 'other' and the creation of the 'citizen-soldiers' bridging the gap between home and front. See Jean-Yves Guiomar, *L'Invention de la Guerre Totale* (Paris: Félin, 2004).

[26] Erica Charters, ed, *Civilians and Wars in Europe, 1618-1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

battlefield, but were instead manifest in all levels of society including arts, culture, and theatre.

The gradually blurring of boundaries between the military and civilian realms invariably affected the foundations of cultural identity. Tracing the roots of British national identity in the long eighteenth century, Linda Colley claims that:

> Like a[n] ... unhappy couple, the British and the French had their teeth so sunk into each other … that they could neither live together peacefully, nor ignore each other and live neutrally apart … Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.[27]

Colley formulated a theory of Britishness as forged against Frenchness rooted, amongst other things, in religious and political dissonances with the Catholicism and absolutist monarchy of its neighbour. Since the Anglo-Scottish act of Union in 1707, pronounced anti-French sentiments spread throughout the British Isles, as a series of wars exacerbated tensions between the two rival countries. According to Colley, this process culminated with the period 1793-1815, when mass conscription and the fear of invasion cemented antagonistic national identities. Britain, she claimed, was 'an invention forged above all by war', a society 'that largely defined itself through fighting'.[28]

In *Britons,* Colley has replicated an existing model of France and Britain as 'natural and necessary' enemies.[29] As Renaud Morieux recently argued, the

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[27] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 1-2, 5.
[28] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 5-9. Similar ideas appear in Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987); Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[29] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York, 2003). The 'new British studies' emerged with the resurgence of nationalism in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The movement questioned the amalgamation of Britain and England as interchangeable terms to investigate how the components of the United Kingdom and its empire came to

placement of France and Britain as irreconcilable foes has been consistently espoused by an extensive body of work since the nineteenth century.[30] This view of colliding Frenchness and Britishness has led to a plethora of studies of national prejudices during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, using pamphlets and the visual culture diffused by caricatures in the press as testaments to increasingly nationalistic sentiments in both countries.[31] Drawing heavily on metropolitan print cultures, these works have tended to reproduce, rather than deconstruct, eighteenth-century stereotypes to be found in economic and travel writings, as much as in propagandist literature.[32]

Renaud Morieux and Michael Rapport, amongst others, have shifted the lens of investigations by looking at exchanges between the two nations during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[33] Without disputing Colley's entire thesis, they have identified significant limitations in her model. By looking at

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produce a British identity. John Greville Agard Pocock has distinguished two strands within this historiography: the 'new British history' which combined a study of Britain as 'a changing population of interacting state-forms, nationalities, and indeed histories', with 'Atlantic histories' focusing on relations with the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. John Greville Agard Pocock, 'The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary', *American Historical Review* 104:2 (1999), p. 490. The 'four nations' theory apprehends the question from a different perspective, by looking at the interactions between the four components of the United Kingdom. See Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge, 1989), Linda Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: an Argument', *Journal of British Studies* 31:4 (1992), pp. 312-315. See also Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1986).

[30] Renaud Morieux, *Une Mer pour Deux Royaumes: La Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise, XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), pp. 17-27.

[31] Morieux, *La Manche*, pp. 17-18; Michael Duffy, 'The Noisy, Empty, Fluttering French: English Images of the French, 1689-1815', *History Today* 32:9 (1982), pp. 21-6.

[32] Paul Gerbod, *Voyages au Pays des Mangeurs de Grenouilles: la France Vue par les Britanniques du XVIIIe Siècle à Nos Jours* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991); Michel Vion, *Perfide Albion! Douce Angleterre? L'Angleterre et les Anglais Vus par les Français du XVIe Siècle à l'An 2000* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: A. Sutton, 2002); Jean Guiffan, *Histoire de l'Anglophobie en France: de Jeanne d'Arc à la Vache Folle* (Rennes: Terre de Brume, 2004); Jean-Paul Bertaud, Alan Forrest, and Annie Jourdan, eds, *Napoléon, les Mots, et les Anglais: Guerre des Mots et des Images* (Paris: Autrement, 2004); Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: the British and the French from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006).

[33] Michael Rapport, 'Loyal Catholics and Revolutionary Patriots: National Identity and the Scots in Revolutionary Paris', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* 2:1 (2008), pp. 51-71; Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: the Treatment of Foreigners 1789-1799* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000).

contact-zones such as borders, the fluid frontier of the Channel in particular, a more complex picture emerges, where more localised investigations unravel a history of relatively peaceful contact rather than hostility.[34] Recent studies of prisoners of war from the Napoleonic era have furthered these novel and more positive paradigms, by exploring, for example, prisoner-of-war depots as a site of exchange, a cultural interface in the midst of warfare. Elodie Duché has recently examined the British prisoners of war at Verdun in France where British prisoners invited French troupes to perform at their clubs and attend comic operas at the local theatre, which mainly staged Revolutionary and sentimental farces in vogue during the Napoleonic conflicts.[35] She found that the British prisoners' theatre at Verdun 'formed the basis of an open but inward-looking community, where French and British participants reflected and commented on their current cohabitation'.[36] Duché's investigations reveal the inherent value of refocusing our lens of enquiry on the more localised 'captivity zone' to draw useful conclusions not only in the experience of Napoleonic prisoners of war, but in the wider socio-cultural tapestry of the early nineteenth century.

Re-focusing a critical lens on the local level, what Renaud Morieux calls 'captivity zones', I will be challenging assertions that the British and French were anatagonistic cultural rivals.[37] Instead I will demonstrate how French prisoner-of-war theatre served as a cultural embassy mediating contact between captor and captive resulting in mutual respect and understanding between the two cultures in the shadow of political and military warfare.

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[34] 'Les contacts entre les populations des deux rives de la Manche ne se limitent pas à des relations dictées par le contexte de rivalité entre les Etats, comme le montre la persistance de logiques d'échange ou de circulation que les conflits n'interrompent jamais totalement.' Morieux, *La Manche*, p. 170.

[35] Elodie Duché, 'A Passage to Imprisonment: British Prisoners of War in Verdun' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2014).

[36] Duché, p. 53.

[37] Renaud Morieux uses the term 'captivity zone' to describe prisoner of war depots as 'places of intermingling, a social laboratory, where people of different status would socialize. These spaces accordingly provided a lens through which to glimpse the repercussions of international conflicts at the level of local communities, small towns, and villages'. See Renaud Morieux, 'French Prisoners of War: Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783', *The Historical Journal*, 56 (March 2013), 55-88 (p. 58).

The study is divided into three parts. As it crosses both geographic boundaries (Spain, Baeleric Islands, and Great Britain) as well as disciplinary fields (military, cultural, literary, and theatre history), Part I: 'Napoleonic Prisoners of War: Sources, Definitions, Contexts and Theory' will tie together the methodologies, backgrounds, and relevant key text in the fields of Napoleonic military and theatre histories, and finish by establishing a theoretical framework for prisoner-of-war theatricals, particularly focusing on humour, nostalgia, and trauma, before we begin to investigate the actual stages of captivity.

Part Two: 'Journey Through Captivity: Isla de Leon, Cabrera and Portchester Castle' will then chart the chronological journey of the prisoners captured at Bailen and their theatricals at each depot. There are essentially two crucial elements in each chapter. First, I will provide a brief historical background of each depot and assess each theatrical space on the basis of the available source material. Secondly, I will closely examine the theatrical texts performed, drawing out recurring themes throughout the entire repertoire.

Chapter 8 will focus specifically on the three-act melodrama, *Roséliska*, written and performed in November 1810. The original hand-written text survives in the V&A archives and reveals how the prisoners were attempting to replicate theatrical form and style from the Paris stage. At the same time, the play reveals deeper issues within the prisoners' experiences of captivity. This chapter will look more closely at the prevalence of melodrama at Portchester Castle. Chapter 9 will follow on from this, exploring the interactions between the British locals and the French prisoners at Portchester Castle. I will use these interactions to view the role of melodrama in the larger Anglo-French cultural relationship in the early nineteenth century.

Finally, Part III: 'Prisoners on Parole and their Theatricals', will examine the theatricals of French officers in parole towns across Britain. Surviving playbills from the parole towns of Selkirk and Kelso in the Scottish Borders, and Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire reveal that French officers were staging

plays.[38] This chapter will highlight the role of social class and sociability in determining the officers' repertoire. We will examine the ways in which the officers' theatricals served as a cultural embassy between French theatre and local British communities.

While I cannot hope to cover the entire spectrum of Napoleonic prisoner-of-war theatricals in this study, I aim to demonstrate the significant value in investigating and analysing these theatricals. By shifting the focus of critical enquiry through the lens of theatre and literary history, I will illustrate how we can gain useful unique insights not only into the prisoners' own emotional and psychological experiences of captivity, but also gain new perspectives of Napoleonic theatre, and the wider cultural tapestry of early nineteenth-century Europe.

[38] Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui* (*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, 1666), *Les Précieuses ridicules* (*The Ridiculous Coquettes*, 1659), and Gouffé and Duval's two-act comedy, *Garrick Double, ou les Deux acteurs anglais* (*The Two Garricks*, 1800) along with Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (*The Barber of Seville*, 1775).

PART I:

NAPOLEONIC PRISONERS-OF-WAR THEATRICALS
SOURCES, DEFINITIONS, CONTEXTS, AND THEORY

Chapter 1

NAPOLEONIC PRISONERS OF WAR
Memoirs and Archives

Establishing Repertoire

Moving the prisoners' theatricals into the critical lens requires us to establish a clear picture of the repertoire of plays performed in each prison depot. Once we know which plays were performed, we can then proceed to analyze the dramatic texts, looking at recurring themes, patterns and motifs within the plays, and critically dissecting nuances of genre.

A significant portion of our understanding of the prisoners' experiences, their theatricals, and the repertoire are taken from first-hand accounts by prisoners who published memoirs at various stages in the decades after their return to France. This study relies on the reports of three memoirists providing significant details about the theatricals at each depot. These include Henri Ducor, Louis-François Gille and Joseph Quantin.[1] Ducor provides a detailed account of the marionette performances at the Isla de Leon while Gille provides useful details about the theatricals on Cabrera and Portchester Castle, and Quantin provides both a list of *sociétaires* and repertoire at Portchester Castle.[2]

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[1] Henri Ducor was a sailor. After his initial military training, he was posted to the warship, Argonaute, which carried Polish legionaries to Santo Domingo and was later besieged by the Royal Navy in the friendly harbour of La Coruña in northern Spain. In August 1805, the Argonaute escaped from port to join the French and Spanish fleets under Vice Admiral Villeneuve at Cadiz as Napoleon manoeuvred his forces for an invasion of England. In October 1805, however, following the French naval defeat at the Battle of Trafalgar, the Argonaute took refuge once more at Cadiz, where it got trapped under blockade. Louis-François Gille had been an art student in Paris and was a conscript in the levy of 1807 at the age of seventeen. He trained in Lille and became quartermaster in the Third Battalion of the First Reserve Legion, entering Spain in December 1807. Quantin was born in Paris and on 10 July 1807 was conscripted into Napoleon's Grande Armée. After a brief sojourn in Amiens, Quantin was sent to Lille where he was incorporated into the First Legion and then in October was sent to Bayonne where the First Legion formed the Second Brigade of the Second Division of Second Corps of the army commanded by General Dupont. See Ducor, pp. 51-65; Gille, pp. 11-28; Joseph Quantin, *Trois ans de séjour en Espagne, I* (Paris: J. Brianchon, 1823), pp. 4-35.

[2] For Ducor's description of marionette performances at Isla de Leon, see Ducor, pp. 138-49, or Appendix A. Joseph Quantin provides a list of repertoire (see Quantin, II, pp.

In addition to details taken from prisoners' memoirs, playbills and abstracts held at the V&A certainly provide the most illuminating and reliable source of information about what the prisoners were performing, however, they only cover a brief period from September 1810 to January 1811, and only provide details of plays performed at Portchester Castle. Other documented evidence includes playbills from French officers at Ashby de-la-Zouch and Kelso. Coupled with the prisoners' memoirs, the playbills and abstracts in the V&A archive allow us to piece together a calendar of plays at Portchester Castle (see Appendix C) in a way that previous historians were unable to do. However, the process is not entirely straightforward. When cross-referenced against each other there remains a degree of inconsistency between the plays documented in Quantin's memoir and those documented in the V&A playbills. For instance, the playbills show that the prisoners performed at least six melodramas including Pixerécourt's *Cœlina, ou l'Enfant du mystère* [*Cœlina, or the Child of Mystery,* 1800], *La Femme à deux maris* [*The Wife of Two Husbands,* 1802], *Victor, ou l'enfant de la forêt* [*Victor, or the Child of the Forest,* 1800] along with Madame de Bawr's *Les Chevaliers du lion* [*The Knights of the Lion,* 1804] and Loaisel de Tréogate's *La Forét périlleuse* [*The Perilous Forest,* 1800].[3] While the V&A archive documents twelve individual performances of melodramas between September 1810 and January 1811,[4] Quantin's catalogue of repertoire for 'Drames et Mélodrames' only lists Beaumarchais' *Eugénie* (1767), *Les Deux amis* (1770) along with La Martelière's *Robert, chef de brigands* (1792).[5]

147-48) as well as details about the theatre's *sociétaire* (see Quantin, II, pp. 149-55). Gille also provides useful descriptions of the theatre at Portchester Castle, particularly about the decor of the interior. Quantin uses the terms 'sociétaire' to describe the members of the personnel of the theatre at Portchester Castle. See Quantin, II, p. 147.

[3] Titles in original Portchester Castle playbills appear in English. For consistency I have quoted them here in their original French followed by English in brackets. Source: Playbills, V&A: THM /415/2/18.

[4] This figure is the aggregate total of performance and includes repetitions of individual plays. For instance, *Cœlina* and *La Forét périlleuse* were both performed twice while *La Femme à deux maris* was performed three times. Source: Playbills, V&A: THM/415/2/18. See Calendar of Plays at Portchester Castle, Appendix C.

[5] La Martelière's *Robert chef de brigands* (1792) was adapted from Schiller's *Die Räuber (Les Brigands)*. The play was published as 'drame' although the *Traité du mélodrame* (1817) labels the play a melodrama. Pixerécourt draws from *Robert* in forming one of his earliest examples of Boulevard melodrama, *Victor, ou l'enfant de la*

Quantin omits melodrama from his memoir entirely, contradicting evidence in playbills that melodrama was by far the most performed genre at Portchester Castle.

There are a number of reasons that might explain the omissions of the *mélodrames* in Quantin's memoir. Although the Portchester Castle register of prisoners lists Quantin as having arrived in September 1810, there is a slim possibility that Quantin was not involved in the theatre until much later in the process.[6] In his list of *sociétaires*, Quantin lists his own role as 'Copiste, page ingénue', which suggests that he would have very good knowledge of the plays being performed.[7] Unfortunately, the V&A archives conclude in January 1811 so we have no definitive documentation of the texts being performed between January 1811 and May 1814 when the prisoners were ultimately repatriated to France. However, it seems highly unlikely that the prisoners would have stopped performing the genre altogether following January 1811 given the fact that they had at their disposal a theatre technically capable of staging melodrama along with musicians and dancers, not to mention the fact that they wrote their own melodrama, *Roséliska*. The prisoners clearly had a preference for melodrama, even though it is not reflected by Quantin.

Damien Zanone reminds us that historians must maintain a critical distance from memoirs as they may be distorted by personal, patriotic and political prejudices.[8] These prejudices, however, can also provide useful insights for historians. Philip Dwyer argues that if memoirs 'are regarded as linguistic

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forêt. See Pierre Franz, 'Le crime devant le tribunal du théâtre: *Les Brigands* de Schiller et leur fortune sur la scène française', *Littératures classiques*, 3: 67 (2008), 219-230.

[6] Quantin's entry in Register of Prisoners at Portchester Castle can be found at TNA: ADM 103/335.

[7] Quantin, II, p. 140, 152.

[8] Zanone points to a blurring of traditional genre boundaries in France in the 1820s and 1830s noting that novels and memoirs were closely related with the risk that they could easily become conflated. 'Dans le discours des auteurs de mémoires historiques, les termes de 'roman' et de 'romanesque' se rencontrent souvent; dès qu'il s'agit de caractériser ce que les mémoires ne sont pas - ne doivent pas être'. This conflation between 'roman' and 'romanesque' is further complicated by divisions between 'memoir' and 'diaries'. As Zanone points out, the principal difference between the last two is that memoirs are post-hoc accounts that must be shaped and moulded into informed, engaging, and entertaining narratives. Damien Zanone, *Ecrire son temps: Les mémoires en France de 1815 à 1848* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2006), pp. 138-40, 273.

documents that contain culturally developed ideologies the accuracy or inaccuracy of a particular memoir or a specific event recounted is less important than the values transmitted in these testimonies'.[9] In other words, the historical veracity of a memoir becomes less important for historical investigation, but rather serves to highlight the personal, patriotic and political prejudices that might help to determine what values the prisoners held. These 'culturally developed ideologies' surface in these memoirs to expose wider social and cultural factors that may be glimpsed in Quantin's memoir.

In both his account of other genres in the repertoire and in his list of *sociétaires* Quantin almost perfectly matches the V&A archive materials thus making the omission of melodrama appear quite deliberate. The neglect of melodrama may betray certain 'culturally developed ideology' in French theatre of the 1820s. By the time Quantin's memoir was published in 1823, melodrama had evolved from its early nineteenth-century origins, and both audience and public perceptions of the genre had changed dramatically.[10] Jean-Marie Thomasseau points out that at the end of the Empire, the collective mentality regarding melodrama had entirely changed and 'une nouvelle génération arrive au moment où la haute société se hiérachise à nouveau et affecte de déserter les Boulevards' ['A new generation arrive at the moment when high society is being restructured and effectively abandon the Boulevards'].[11] The audience for melodrama had changed by the 1820s, and perceptions of the genre changed too, and this may well have been a contributing factor in Quantin's omission.[12]

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[9] Philip G. Dwyer, 'Public Remembering, Private Reminiscing: French Military Memoirs and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', *French Historical Studies*, 33:2 (Spring 2010), 231-58 (p. 234).

[10] Melodrama will be discussed at length in chapters 8 and 9. As early as 1817 the authors of *Traité du Mélodrame* are mocking the genre.

[11] Thomasseau notes that 'l'écriture et la réception des mélodrames s'en trouvent considérablement modifiées. La soumission aux valeurs traditionnelles, civiques et guerrières, commence à lasser. Une nouvelle génération arrive au moment où la haute société se hiérachise à nouveau et affecte de déserter les Boulevards'. Jean-Marie Thomasseau, *Le Mélodrame* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), p. 51.

[12] Arnaud Laster writes that Victor Hugo subverted melodrama's happy endings 'constituting a definitive anti-melodrama'. See Arnaud Laster, *Pleins Feux sur Victor Hugo* (Paris: Comédie-Française, 1981), p. 378. See also Albert W. Halsall, *Victor Hugo and the Romantic Drama* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 231.

I am suspicious of Quantin's repertoire, which seems altogether more genteel than the documented evidence at the V&A suggests. While the V&A playbills indicate pantomime, *féerie*, and melodrama were geared more toward the popular classes, Quantin instead presents slightly more upscale titles of high comedy, tragedies, *drame bourgeois* and opéra-comique.[13] It appears to be the case that Quantin was trying to give the repertoire a more genteel spin consistent with 'culturally developed ideology' of French fashions and trends of the 1820s.[14] While previous historians have taken Quantin's repertoire at face value, the availability of new archival materials allows us to cross-reference and nuance this information to get a better sense of the actual repertoire of plays performed.

Using Archives

Playbills

Aside from first-hand accounts and official documented evidence,[15] we are fortunate to have the playbills and abstracts at the V&A along with a series of playbills for French parole officers held in various local libraries and archives around Great Britain. Michael Reason points out that these primary artifacts present a unique methodological challenge for a theatre historian attempting 'to explore how we can know live performance through its representational traces'.[16]

[13] Following Napoleon's 1806 decree on theatres, these latter genres were enshrined in the repertoire of the *grands théâtres*. Their status as more elevated forms of theatre would remain throughout most of the nineteenth century.
[14] Dwyer, p. 234.
[15] Official materials relating to the Battle of Bailen, the Isla de Leon and Cabrera can be found in the decisions of the Spanish Junta Central, the Council of Regency and the Majorcan Junta Superior in the Archivo Historico in Madrid, the French war archives (Service Historique de la Défense at the château de Vincennes in Paris), and the British Admiralty Foreign Office papers at the National Archives, Kew. There is also a remarkable collection from the Desbrulls family at the Archivo Municipal of Palma de Majorca. These documents include the surviving, handwritten manuscript records from the French prisoners on Cabrera, and a large collection of correspondence to and from the Cabrera commissioner based in Palma, Don Antonio Desbrulls.
[16] Matthew Reason, *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2006), p. 4.

What exactly can playbills tell us about the theatricals themselves that are by nature ephemeral?

My analysis of these materials draws upon Jacky Bratton's description of 'intertheatrical reading' in *New Readings in Theatre History*, which 'seeks to articulate the mesh of connections between all kinds of theatre texts, and between texts and their uses', moving from the playbills to their referents.[17] These playbills present multiple signifiers, offering a lens through which to interpret these signifiers. Reading the playbill as an artefact we can gain valuable inferences into the prisoners' performance from factors such as the dates and venues to the history of prisoner-of-war depots during the Napoleonic Wars, from the play titles to the dramatic texts they signify and from those dramatic texts to the history of Napoleonic theatre, its genres, receptions, and audiences, and finally to the imagined performance event itself.

I view these playbills not only as a collection of signifiers, but as important artifacts of the cultural transfer between French and British, captives and captors. These playbills are more than mere advertisements; they are in fact invitations to a local British audience by French captives, and carry significant consequences to our understanding of the Anglo-French cultural relationship in the Napoleonic Wars. The very fact that these playbills survive at all should not be overlooked as an indication that the captive-captor, Anglo-French dynamics were more nuanced than has previously been acknowledged.

Registers

Playbills consistute only a portion of the documentary evidence informing this study. Researching Napoleonic prisoners of war in general reveals an abundance of documentary material relating to the administration of, and the negotiations pertaining to the treatment, conditions and exchange of prisoners of war. These include correspondence from the Transport Board—the branch of the Admiralty responsible for prisoners of war in Britain—along with correspondence of British military commanders in the Mediterranean and the various Spanish

[17] Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 37.

administrative bodies known as 'juntas'. Usefully we also have the maritime diaries of captains of the transport ships, the diaries of Lord Collingwood and registers of prisoners of war and the well-catalogued correspondence from the Admiralty offices in Britain. While these documents have been well used by military historians, they can also prove to be valuable resources for theatre historians as well.

Mark Towsey has shown us how cultural historians can use primary materials and archives in ways that have been previously overlooked.[18] Towsey has drawn upon the registers from the Subscription Library at Selkirk to uncover the reading trends of the French officers on parole in Selkirk from 1810 to 1814. While one of the parole officers, Adelbert Doisy de Villargennes, tells us that the prisoners at Selkirk established a theatre and performed the 'auteurs tragiques et comiques les plus populaires' ['most popular tragic and comic authors'], he fails to provide exact details of the repertoire.[19] In the absence of any surviving playbills from their performances, I turned to the Subscription Library register to discover that a significant portion of the books being loaned were dramatic texts including plays by Molière as well as texts by Colley Cibber, John Vanburgh, Joanna Baillie, William Congreve, John Dryden, George Farquhar, Samuel Foote, and John Gay.[20] While these registers are far from providing an accurate picture of which plays were actually performed, they do give a strong indication that the parole officers were engaged with both French as well as British theatrical texts, and these may have formed a portion of the repertoire of 'auteurs tragiques et comiques les plus populaires' that Doisy tells were performed at Selkirk.[21]

The Selkirk Subscription Library registers serve as a reminder of the inherent value of interdisciplinary research and the way it allows different

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[18] Mark Towsey, 'Imprisoned Reading: French Prisoners of War at the Selkirk Subscription Library', in *Civilians and Wars in Europe, 1618-1815,* ed. Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft, and Hannah Smith (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 241-61.

[19] Adelbert Jacques Doisy de Villargennes, *The French Prisoners of War at Selkirk* (n.d.) being extracts translated by J. John Vernon from *Sourvenirs militaires de Doisy de Villargennes* (Paris: M.G. Berton, 1900), p. 40.

[20] Data compiled from Selkirk Subscription Library Register, 1799-1814: S/PL/7/1-2.

[21] Doisy, p. 40.

reappraisals and readings of the same source materials. Among the vast collection of the Admiralty papers held at the National Archives in Kew are the registers of prisoners of war as they arrived into Britain.[22] These registers not only provide names and date of prisoners' arrival, they also provide useful demographic information including place of birth, which is useful in compiling the overall demographic of the *sociétaires* involved in making theatre.[23] The registers also provide physical descriptions of each prisoner including height, weight, build, eye colour, stature as well as any distinguishing marks. While these indicators were originally designed to allow the Transport Board to identify prisoners in case of death, illness or escape, they can also be reappraised by theatre historians to give a visual sense of the actors' physicality.

As Jim Davis points out, 'nineteenth-century theatre was physical theatre', and to gain an accurate sense of the theatre it is also important to take actor's physicality into consideration. [24] After all, 'actors continually demonstrated their physical skills in melodrama and pantomime through fencing, acrobatics, dancing, the depicition of silent characters, and the negotiation of large stages'.[25] As we will see in Chapter 3, the repertoire at Portchester Castle consists mostly of melodrama, pantomime, and *féerie* plays, requiring 'an extraordinary physical and acrobatic agility'.[26] An etching of the prisoners in the theatre at Portchester reveals two French prisoners engaged in a fencing match (see fig. 11) giving a good indication of the prisoners' physicality that no doubt would have also translated into their stage performances. In addition to this etching, we can turn to the registers to gain a better sense of their physicality.[27]

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[22] The vast collection of Admiralty papers held at the National Archives, Kew are registered as TNA: ADM. ADM 98: Letters relating to prisoners of war; ADM 103/1-648: Registers of prisoners of war; ADM 105/44-66: Miscellaneous papers regarding prisoners of war.

[23] Registers for prisoners at Portchester Castle are held at TNA: ADM 103/315-340.

[24] Jim Davis, 'Presence, Personality and Physicality: Actors and their Repertoires, 1776-1895', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre: Volume II, 1660-1895,* ed. John Donohue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 272-91 (p. 273).

[25] Davis, p. 273.

[26] Davis, p. 277.

[27] To get a sense of the gestures and poses commonly performed in this period see Johann Jacob Engel and Henry Siddons, *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807).

In Quantin's list of the theatre *sociétaires* at Portchester Castle he provides a useful catalogue of prisoners who performed stock roles such as *tyran* [tyrant/villain], *premier rôle* [lead male role], *première rôle en femme* [lead female role], *père noble* [elderly male role], *comique* [comic], *les mères* [elderly female role], and *jeune première* [young female role].[28] Cross-referencing this list with the prison registers is illuminating. Both Gille and Quantin tell us that 'un maréchal des logis des dragons' named Hippolyte Sutat had become known for performing all 'les premiers rôles de femmes, jeunes premières et grandes coquettes'.[29] The registers indicate that Sutat was twenty-two years old in June 1810 when he arrived at Portchester Castle.[30] The registers also indicate that he had a slender build, and small stature at 5 feet, 6 inches with brown hair and blue eyes. The description from the registers provide a useful indication that Sutat matched the physical dimension for the *premiere rôle en femme* performing in roles such as Madame Fersen in Pixérécourt's *La Femme à deux maris* (1802), as Gille notes.[31] Sutat played the titular female role in the prisoners' own three-act melodrama, *Roséliska*, staged at Portchester Castle in 1810.[32] By contrast the *tyran* playing Polowitz in *Roséliska* was Jacques Belin de Balu.[33] Belin was slightly older at 29-years-old when he arrived at Portchester Castle, and is described as 'stout' at 5 foot 7 inches with black hair and hazel eyes.[34] From this data it appears that Belin cuts a somewhat swarthy appearance, making him a suitable tyrant and villain.

While prisoners' memoirs may provide a unique personal perspective on historic events, there is yet another useful source that has been grossly overlooked, and misread, by previous historians, and that is the actual performance spaces where the theatricals were staged.

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[28] List of *sociétaires* can be found in Quantin, II, p. 149-55; the list is included in Appendix B.
[29] Gille, p. 266; Quantin, II, pp. 149-55.
[30] Hippolyte Sutat's registration can be found in TNA: ADM 103/336.
[31] Gille, p. 266; TNA: ADM 103/336.
[32] Quantin, II, pp. 149-55. The original manuscript for *Roséliska* can be found at V&A: GB/71/THM/415.
[33] V&A: GB/71/THM/415.
[34] Jacques Belin de Balu registration can be found in TNA: ADM 103/336.

Performance Spaces

For the most part, the performance spaces in this study have been forgotten, destroyed, or left to fall into ruin. The oversight, I believe, is typical of the general lack of interest in the prisoners' theatricals by previous historians and archaeologists. [35] Both Cabrera and Portchester Castle have undergone archaeological investigations, but unfortunately, neither of these surveys has given satisfying answers to the material conditions or layout of the prisoner-of-war theatre spaces.[36] This study will attempt to bridge this gap. Where possible, we can work with existing memoirs, archival material, dramaturgical analysis of texts and the spaces themselves to formulate an idea of what the theatres would have looked like, and how they would have been used. In doing so I will be demonstrating that these spaces can also reveal a great deal about the material conditions of the performance and theatre within the prison camps, and can also provide useful insights into the prisoners' repertoire as well as the social and cultural dynamics within the prison community.

In order to get a clearer picture of the prisoners' theatricals it is also necessary to understand the spaces in which they performed. The theatre on Cabrera is perhaps the most misunderstood of the three locations. While a handful of first-hand accounts of the theatricals on Cabrera give very clear indications of where the theatre was and how it looked, these have been misread

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[35] Archaeology of prisoner-of-war camps has recently received due critical attention in Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum, eds, *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-century Mass Internment* (New York: Springer, 2013). The social and cultural importance of theatre buildings and performance spaces has gained significant scholarly attention. Marvin Carlson argues that performance space 'may serve to stimulate or to reinforce within audiences certain ideas of what theatre represents within their society and how the performances it is offering are to be interpreted and integrated into the rest of their social and cultural life'. See Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 2. Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks have proposed a theatre archaeology to reconstitute a 'stratigraphy of layers: of text, physical action, music and/or soundtrack, scenography and/or architecture'. See Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London; NewYork: Routledge, 2001), p. 11 and p. 24.

[36] Barry Cunliffe et al, 'Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume V: Post Medieval 1609–1819', *Society of Antiquaries Research Report 52* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1994); Pep Amengual and Miquel Frontera, eds, *Oblidats a Cabrera: el captiveri Napoleonic, 1809-1814* (Palma: Promomallorca Edicions S. L., 2009-2010).

and mis-interpreted by historians. Several of the memoirs distinctly tell us that the prisoners performed in a disused 'citerne' ['cistern'] near the castle. A map provided by the prisoners also indicates the location of the 'théâtre établi dans une citerne' ['theatre established in a cistern'].[37]

In his 1934 survey of the prisoners of Cabrera, however, Geisendorf-des-Gouttes suggests that the prisoners performed in a 'caverne' ['cave'] not a 'citerne' ['cistern'].[38] Despite multiple suggestions that the prisoners were performing in a 'citerne' ['cistern'], Geisendorf insists that they performed in a cave. Without further interrogation of the actual evidence, subsequent twentieth- and twenty-first-century historians have followed Geisendorf's conclusion. Today, tourist guides and literature all point toward the cave as the site of the theatre, when in fact, all documented evidence points to the theatre having been located in a disused cistern near the castle.

Understanding the performance spaces themselves is important because, as we will see, the repertoire is in part dependent upon the size of the physical space and availability of resources in each depot. On the Isla de Leon, the prisoners are crowded into a hospital where space was critically limited. In this environment, marionette theatre is without doubt the most practical form of entertainment, as it requires little space, but can still be viewed by a wide audience. On Cabrera, the prisoners perform theatre in a ruined cistern allowing for more spacious theatrical endeavours such as *drame bouregois* or classic comedy. At Portchester Castle the prisoners are provided raw materials to construct a theatre and are therefore able to construct a theatre in the basement of the keep capable of more complex staging such as pantomime, *féerie* and melodrama.

The correlation between spaces and repertoire highlights the centrality of theatre in the prisoners' lives by revealing that they not only utilized limited spaces and available resources, they maximized the use of each space to its fullest potential. The fact that the prisoners expend considerable amounts of time

[37] See map in index Quantin, I [n.p.].
[38] Théophile Geisendorf-des-Gouttes, *Les Archipels enchanteurs et farouches: Baléares et Canaries: Cabrera, l'île tragique* (Geneva: Labor, 1934), p. 257.

and energy converting unused and derelict spaces into performance spaces[39] coupled with their eagerness and ingenuity in adapting these spaces from finite precious resource suggests that theatre held a central role in the prisoners' survival.[40]

By adaptating and utilizing these otherwise wasted spaces within the prison camps, we observe that the prisoners are effectively drawing them into their own realm of control. Indeed in each location we see more defined attempts to recreate performances and spaces that are strongly reminiscent of Parisian theatres, or that are imbued with evocations of home.[41] The prisoners are not only using these spaces to reconnect with their shared past, they are effectively establishing a cultural microcosm of Paris, staking a French flag in the heart of each depot. In doing so, the prisoners are able to transform the confines of the prison walls into a domain that may allow for an escape, not in a physical or geographic sense, but an emotional and psychological one.[42]

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[39] On Cabrera, for instance, where natural materials are critically scarce, the prisoners utilize valuable resources such as branches and heather—the same materials used to create their own rudimentary shelters—to create a theatre on the beach. When this theatre is destroyed by winter storms the prisoners utilize a cistern on the hillside, which again could have otherwise been used as shelter from the elements. Moreover, we learn that the prisoners used pinewood torches to light the theatre—wood that similarly could have used for more practical purposes with the onset of winter. The fact that the prisoners are sacrificing their limited resources underlines the vital importance of theatre to their survival.

[40] On Cabrera the theatre on the beach is destroyed in early November 1809, and within a matter of days the prisoners have converted a ruined cistern into a working theatre. The prisoners are transported to Portchester Castle in July 1810, and by September they have a fully-functioning theatre constructed in the basement of the keep.

[41] On Cabrera the prisoners erect a theatre on the beach close to a so-called Palais-Royal where they perform classics of the Comédie-Française. Since 1799, the Comédie-Française in Paris performed in the salle Richelieu. The theatre is part of the Palais-Royal complex in the heart of Paris. The same phenomenon occurs again at the Théâtre des Variétés at Portchester Castle where the prisoners not only named the venue after a famous Parisian theatre, they also go to great lengths to replicate 'souvenirs' of Paris on their stage curtain.

[42] In Chapter 4 I will argue that repertoire and performance spaces combined to serve as manifestation of the prisoners' own 'fantasy of return' or nostalgic longing for home.

Chapter 2

DEFINING NAPOLEONIC PRISONERS-OF-WAR

Franco-Spanish Relations

Since 1788, Spain had been ruled by the inept Bourbon king Charles IV (1748-1819), and his chief minister, Manuel de Godoy (1767-1851).[1] The country, however, was paralysed by bureaucratic lethargy, litigiousness, and punishing commercial taxes. After the War of the Pyrenees in the last years of the eighteenth century, Bourbon Spain had been allied to France, and Napoleon was keen to use the country for his own Imperial purposes. Napoleon turned his sights towards the Iberian Peninsula where Britain had allied itself with Portugal, gaining a foothold on the continent, and was secretly trading smuggled goods across Europe. When the Portuguese Prince Regent refused to stop trading with Britain, Napoleon responded with force. On 18 October 1807 Napoleon pushed a twenty-five-thousand-strong expeditionary force across the Spanish border to conquer Portugal. The Spanish court raised no objection.[2] In November 1807 the French marshal Jean-Andoche Junot (1771-1813) led a force of French and Spanish armies to invade Portugal, pushing the British out of the peninsula, and thus instigating what is now known as the Peninsular Wars.

The initial arrival of the French troops in Spain in October 1807 was a matter of contention for some, but a source of intrigue for others. Some assiduously counted the troops, and noted their regiments' numbers, while the

[1] For background and general information about the Peninsula Wars (1808-1814) I have used: Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular Wars: A New History* (London: Allen Lane, 2002) and *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), particularly Chapter 7: Across the Pyrenees. Other useful histories of the period include: David Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993); Ronald Fraser, *Napoleon's Cursed War: Spanish Popular Resistance in the Peninsular War, 1808-1814* (London: Verso, 2007); David Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer: A History of the Peninsular War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1986); Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War, 1807-1814: A Concise Military History* (London: David and Charles, 1974). A standard reference book on the subject is Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* (London: Greenhill Books, reprinted edition 1995).

[2] Under the terms of the Treaty of Fontainbleau (1807), Manuel Godoy and the Bourbon monarchy were to share the spoils of conquest.

majority gawped at the bright uniforms, the cuirassiers' shining breast-and back-plates, the extravagantly attired staff officers.[3] Charles Esdaile points out that many young men began 'aping French fashions and mannerisms and even peppering their speech with snatches of French' but that 'the result for the rest of the population was a genuine fear that an attempt was afoot to strip Spain of her soul'.[4] After the conquest of Portugal, Napoleon continued reinforcing his armies in the Iberian Peninsula until they reached one-hundred-thousand men by the spring of 1808. In almost all the occupied areas imperial troops acted like an army of occupation, sacking and requisitioning food which they claimed their Spanish ally was not providing in sufficient quantities or rapidly enough.[5]

Anti-French sentiments were stirred when rumours began spreading of French seizing various Spanish fortresses and ports and news that Junot had taken over Portugal in the Emperor's name and was busy looting its wealth.[6] On the further news that a fifty-thousand-strong French army under Marshal Mural was now advancing upon Madrid, with the stated object of continuing southwards to capture the Spanish naval stronghold of Cadiz, fear began spreading through Madrid and the Castilla.[7] Following the Mutiny of Aranjuez in March 1808, the French sympathizing King Charles IV abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Ferdinand, but in May, both men were effectively taken prisoner by the French Emperor at Bayonne who forced Ferdinand to sign his own abdication thus giving Napoleon the opportunity to install his brother Joseph Bonaparte (1768-1844) on the Spanish throne.[8]

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[3] Fraser, p. 7.
[4] Esdaile, *International*, p. 305.
[5] Rafael Farias, *Memorias de la Guerra de la independencia, escritas por soldados franceses* (Madrid: Editorial Hispano-Africana, 1919), pp. 52-53; Fraser, p. 10.
[6] The French had seized the main Iberian ports of Lisbon, Barcelona and San Sebastian along with a number of strategic fortress across the country, particularly in Cataluna and Asturias.
[7] Antonio Fernández García, 'La sociedad madrilènea bajo la ocupación francesa', in *El Dos de Mayo y sus precedents. Actas del Congreso Internacional,* ed. Enciso Recio (Madrid: 1992), p. 589.
[8] The Mutiny of Aranjuez was an uprising led against King Charles IV that took place in the town of Aranjuez, Spain between 17 and 19 March 1808. Charles IV abdicated, and his son, Ferdinand VII took the Spanish throne. Napoleon invited both Charles IV and Ferdinand VII to Bayonne, France under the pretence of resolving the conflict. Once in

Supplanting the Spanish monarchy proved to be the final straw in a growing environment of anti-French sentiment sweeping the now occupied country, which subsequently led to a series of violent uprisings against the French invaders across the Iberian Peninsula. These uprisings were in turn met with brutal suppression by the French occupiers.[9] The transition from the French being a powerful ally to a ruthless Imperial authority occurred within a relatively short space of time in 1807 to 1808, and was fraught with a fierce bitterness and rivalry on both sides.

Power alliances shifted quickly on the Iberian Peninsula in 1808. With the fall of the Spanish King Charles IV, several regional authorities throughout Spain (mostly in the south) had formed administrations as a patriotic alternative to the official administration toppled by the French invaders. These became known as *juntas,* administrative councils formed mostly by town elders, magistrates, local aristocrats and senior clergy.[10] The Supreme Central Junta of Spain and the Indies was established in September 1808, based in Seville, and the delegates swore their oath of loyalty to Ferdinand VII, being held house prisoner at Valençay in France. Almost immediately, the Supreme Junta began negotiations with Britain for a political and military alliance against the French.[11]

Battle of Bailen

In May 1808, Napoleon's military commander in Madrid, Marshal Joachim Murat (1767-1815), dispatched French forces south from Toledo to occupy and

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Bayonne, Charles IV handed the crown to Napoleon. The Emperor named his brother Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain.

[9] The brutality of these uprisings and subsequent suppression are vividly depicted by François Goya in his paintings *El 2 de mayo de 1808 en Madrid* (1814) and *El tres de mayo de 1808 en Madrid* (1814), and a series of prints, *Los desastres de la Guerra* (1810-1814).

[10] A detailed account of the formation and function of the juntas can be found in William Spence Robertson, 'The Juntas of 1808 and the Spanish Colonies', *English Historical Review*, 31:124 (1916), 573-85; See also Esdaile, *Peninsular War,* p. 53.

[11] On 14 January 1809, Great Britain signed a treaty with the Supreme Central Junta recognising Fernando as King of Spain.

fortify the strategic port of Cadiz against attack by the British.[12] The force was led by General Pierre Dupont de l'Étang (1765-1840), a forty-three-year-old hero of Napoleon's victories at Ulm, Halle and Friedland, who was in his first independent command.[13] Aside from five hundred elite seamen of the Imperial Guard, Dupont's army was a hastily assembled group of young and untested conscripts with twelve hundred members of the Garde de Paris, and thirty-three hundred Swiss mercenaries.[14] By mid-June 1808, the First Reserve Legion stationed in Madrid joined other French regiments in Toledo under the command of General Dominque Honoré Vedel (1771-1848) and they too departed for Andalusia to support General Dupont's increasingly isolated army.[15]

By 17 July 1808, the rebel Spanish army led by General Francisco Javier Castaños with thirty thousand troops had occupied Bailen and cut communications between the French armies of Dupont and Vedel. When Dupont attempted an orderly retreat back to Madrid, he found himself surrounded by Spanish forces, and on 18 July he sued for terms with Castaños. Though they were victorious, the Spanish at Bailen now faced an enormous logistical problem of what to do with almost 17500 new French prisoners of war placed under their care and protection.[16] The rapidly assembled Spanish armies under the command of General Castaños had no central government from which to take direction, and no obvious means of containing and caring for the captives (the Supreme Junta was not established until September 1808). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the

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[12] The entire campaign in Andalusia and the Battle of Bailen are meticulously outlined in Partridge and Oliver, *Battle Studies in the Peninsula: A Historical Guide to the Military Actions in Spain, Portugal and Southern France between June 1808 and April 1814* (London: Constable, 1998), p. 69, and described in detail in Philippe Gille, *Mémoires d'un conscrit de 1808*, 3rd edn (Paris: Victor-Havard, 1892), pp. 73-106.

[13] See Lieutenant-General Comte Dupont de l'Étang, *Lettre sur l'Espagne en 1808 à M. le Cte Dupont* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1823).

[14] Both Sir Charles Oman and Charles Esdaile point to the overwhelming presence of conscripts as one of the main factors in the defeat at the Battle of Bailen. Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War: Volume III*: *September 1809-December 1810* (London: Greenhill Books, reprinted 1995) and Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London: Macmillan, 2003). See also Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War, 1807-1814: A Concise Military History* (London: David and Charles, 1974), pp. 53-55.

[15] Glover, pp. 53-55.

[16] Gates, pp. 55-56.

terms of surrender signed by the French and Spanish commanders were highly favourable for the French.

As one of the quartermasters, Louis Gille transcribed the capitulation in his book of orders and it shows the conditions of surrender. Under the terms and conditions, Article 6 read:

> Toutes les troupes françaises en Andalousie se rendront à San-Lucar et à Rota par journées d'étapes qui ne pourront excéder quatre lieues de poste, avec les séjours nécessaires pour être embarquées sur des vaisseaux de transport espagnols, avec leurs armes et équipages, et conduites au port de Rochefort, en France.[17]
>
> [All French troops in Andalusia will travel to San Lucar and Rota by day-long stages, which shall not exceed four staging posts, with necessary rest periods, and there be embarked on Spanish ships of transport, with their arms and baggage, and be conducted to the port of Rochefort, France.]

The terms signed by Castaños and Dupont were clear. The prisoners would be marched to the naval ports of San Lucar or Rota near Cadiz where they would be repatriated to Rochefort in France.[18] However, the complex and ever-shifting alliances between the British, Spanish and the French meant that a straightforward repatriation of French prisoners would not be quite as simple as the terms of the surrender dictated.

Following the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, the British Royal Navy had blockaded the remaining French and Spanish fleets in Cadiz Harbour, and therefore any shipment of prisoners in or out of Spanish ports would necessarily require British approval. The Royal Navy's commander in the Mediterranean, Lord Collingwood, informed Don Tomás de Morla, the Spanish captain-general of Andalusia, that he could not let the prisoners leave Spain without first

[17] Gille, p. 118.
[18] Rochefort is a naval base on the west coast of France. Rochefort and Toulon were customary ports for repatriation of prisoners of war in the eighteenth century.

consulting London.[19] On 19 August 1808, the minister of war, Viscount Castlereagh, delivered the British cabinet's response from London to Lord Collingwood:

> […] it is impossible not to feel, and to regret, that an Army of sixteen thousand men, nearly half of them fully equipped, is thereby permitted to return to France, in order possibly to recommence, within the space of a few weeks, a fresh attack on Spain—and that the Capitulation has produced nothing more than an exchange of position of sixteen-thousand men, in July posted in Andalusia, to thirteen thousand men to be posted perhaps at [Pamplona] before November.[20]

The British did not want the French prisoners to be freed in order to simply re-join Napoleon's forces. Without British approval to repatriate the prisoners, the Spanish were stuck with them. The prisoners posed an enormous logistical burden of housing, feeding and protecting them, not to mention the threat imposed by disease and growing violence of local mobs.[21] Meanwhile, following the defeat at the Battle of Bailen, along with a series of insurrections in the provinces and in Madrid, Joseph Bonaparte had fled the capital. In December 1808, he returned with his brother Napoleon who led a force to retake Madrid. Upon hearing news that Napoleon was marching on the capital, the Supreme Central Junta fled from Madrid back to Seville and gave orders for all French prisoners—temporarily held in Seville—to be marched south to Cadiz, and away from Napoleon's advancing army.[22] By the end of December the exhausted and defeated French prisoners marched toward the sea where they were told that

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[19] See Journal of Vice Admiral Lord Collingwood, Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean (1808-1809) held at TNA: ADM 50/60.
[20] Letter from Viscount Castlereagh to Vice Admiral Lord Collingwood (19August 1808), TNA: FO 72/60.
[21] Colonel Juan de Lacy wrote to de Morla of the difficulties the French soldiers faced passing Spanish countryside where the French soldiers 'han entrado como conquistadores' ['have entered as conquerors']. Letter Juan de Lacy to Don Tomás Morla, 30 July 1808 in Archivo Historico Nacional (AHN): Diversas Colecciones, leg. 76, N2.
[22] Correspondence relating to the removal of the prisoners can be found at AHN: Diversas Colecciones, leg. 76, N2, no. 13.

ships awaited them. The captives foresaw an immediate return to France, and 'l'espoir de revoir notre patrie répandit la joie dans tous les coeurs' ['the hope of return to our homeland filled our hearts with joy'].[23] Little could they have known that this was merely the first stage of a long and tortuous captivity, and that it would be six long years before many of them would set foot in France again.

Napoleonic Prisoners of War

The prisoners from Bailen were stuck in an unfortunate turning point in the history of warfare where conventions of prisoner-of-war treatment and exchange—conventions deeply rooted in notions of honour and class—were put under considerable strain. Conventions regarding the treatment and exchange of prisoners of war in the early nineteenth century date back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years' War.[24] Amongst other things, the Treaty established the convention that Prisoners of war should be released without ransom at the end of hostilities and that they should be allowed to return to their homelands.[25]

The issue of protection, administration, treatment and exchange of prisoners of war, and the humanity of warfare in general, was a topic in Enlightenment discourse.[26] In 1758, Swiss-German lawyer and philosopher, Emerich de Vattel (1714-1767), published his influential *Le Droit des Gens* (1758), addressing the civilised behaviour of states and its many customs including the treatment of prisoners of war.[27] Vattel argued for the humane treatment of prisoners, a practice he found in the French and English states:

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[23] Gille, p. 161.
[24] For general reference see Jonathan Vance (ed), *Encyclopedia of Prisoners of War and Internment* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000); Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), pp. 36-45; and Gavin Daly, 'Napoleon's Lost Legions: French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1803-1814', *History*, 89 (June 2004), 361-80.
[25] Ibid.
[26] See Best, pp. 36-45.
[27] Emerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations, Or, Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns, with Three Early Essays on the Origin and Nature of Natural Law and on Luxury*, ed. and trans. by Béla Kapossy and Richard Whitmore (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008).

'When we hear the story of the treatment which prisoners of war have experienced on the part of the English and the French', he wrote, 'we admire and revere those noble nations'.[28] Whether or not the treatment was admirable is open to debate. What we do know is that with the collapse of the Peace of Amiens in 1803, Britain and France were once again at war, and most of these conventions that Vattel had once praised, almost entirely ceased to exist.

Gavin Daly points out that throughout most of the eighteenth century, Britain and France had generally agreed to three conventions that were more or less steadfastly observed regarding prisoners of war, and that helped 'reduce the number of prisoners and the length of their internment'.[29] Firstly was the exchange of prisoners of war. Both the British and French had agreed destinations and customs for the frequent exchange of captured prisoners of war.[30] Secondly, was the establishment of the *parole d'honneur,* effectively a gentleman's agreement, wherein captured officers could be repatriated on the condition that they not return to battle. Thirdly was the convention that civilians were not to be taken as prisoners.[31]

With the collapse of the Peace of Amiens in 1803, Napoleon ordered the unprecedented imprisonment of all British males in France, both military *and* civilian between the age of 18 and 60.[32] While the British Admiralty showed willingness to abide by established conventions, including the repatriation of civilians, Napoleon was reluctant to send captured prisoners back to Britain thus stalling the process of exchange and repatriation.[33] The prisoners from Bailen

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[28] De Vattel, p. 284.
[29] Daly, p. 365; see also Best, pp. 78-79, 125-26, 154-57.
[30] Exchanges were normally made at Toulon in France. For more on cross Channel exchanges in the eighteenth century see Renaud Morieux, *The Channel: England, France and the Construction of a Maritime Border in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[31] Daly, p. 365.
[32] See Elodie Duché, 'A Passage to Imprisonment: British Prisoners of War in Verdun' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2014); Michael Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962).
[33] The Morlaix negotiations from April to October 1810, between the British representative, Mackenzie, and the French representative, Moustier, were the closest the two nations came to ratifying an agreement for a general exchange of prisoners of war. In his analysis of the negotiations, P. Coquelle argues that Napoleon sabotaged the talks because he felt that the 11,000 British prisoners in French hands were of much greater

ultimately suffered the consequences.[34] With the shifting standards regarding humanity in warfare in the early nineteenth century, the prisoners from Bailen found themselves forced to endure prolonged and gruelling captivity.[35] The very system under which they fought and to which they remained loyal was the same system that ultimately led to their suffering. While they celebrated Napoleon and lived in hope that he would come to their rescue, it is unlikely that they would have known that their beloved Emperor had all but washed his hands of them.[36]

Officer Corps

The treatment of Napoleonic prisoners of war was very much constituted along the lines of social and military hierarchies of the age. Both in Spain and Britain, prisoners of war generally fell into two categories: the 'rank and file' (non-

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value to Britain's war effort than the 41,000 French prisoners in Britain were to his own military machine. See P. Coquelle, *Napoleon and England, 1803–1813* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904), pp. 237–64. Much of the relevant correspondence for the Morlaix negotiations is held at the Archives Nationales in Paris (AN): FF2 19.

[34] The process of prisoner exchange broke down but did not cease all together. Articles 18 and 19 of the controversial Convention of Cintra, signed on 30 August 1808 between British and French forces in Portugal, detailed the terms of the French surrender, and allowed General Junot and the French army of Portugal to return safely to France. For the details and controversy of the convention see Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, I (1995), pp. 268–78, 625–7. In fact, one prisoner in this study, a regimental surgeon, Auguste Thillaye, is exchanged in 1813 for a British surgeon being held at Verdun in France. French prisoners-of-war held in Britain could still gain their liberty through three means: as invalids, as paroled officers, or through exchanges. To the anger and frustration of the Transport Board, these methods of transfer were not reciprocated by the French government. See Daly, p. 367. A table on French prisoners of war in Britain between 22 May 1803 and 30 May 1814 indicates that 1,979 French prisoners of war were released from Britain by exchange, see AN: FF2 17.

[35] Gavin Daly argues that the deterioration in prisoner-of-war exchanges takes its root in shifting standards of warfare from the Revolution. He writes that 'the prisoners were victims of a historic shift in the conduct of war; a shift that was an integral part of wider French revolutionary social and political change. The French Revolution, rather than the Napoleonic era, was the epicentre of this shift'. See Daly, p. 380.

[36] In the collection of Napoleon's vast and detailed military correspondence, there are just four brief letters from the Emperor that refer to the prisoners from Bailen. See 12 July 1810 (no. 16638), 25 November 1811 (no. 18287), 25 December 1811 (no. 18368) and 23 March 1813 (no. 19751) in *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier,* XX, XXIII, XXV (Paris: Paris H. Plon, J. Dumaine, 1858-1870), pp. 462-63; pp. 35-36; pp. 108-09, 118. One further letter from the Emperor to the minister in June 1811 asked that an argument should be made for repatriation of the prisoners of Bailen who had been transported to Britain. No action followed.

commissioned officers and below) and commissioned officers.[37] At the Isla de Leon, prisoners were segregated with officers either at the military hospital of San Carlos or on the ponton, Vieille-Castille. While the rank and file were transported to Cabrera, commissioned officers were held in military barracks or at Belver Castle in Palma. In Britain, the rank and file were housed in land depots such as Portchester Castle while officers were sent to parole towns across the country. With different forms of treatment, there was a difference in the experience of captivity between the 'rank and file' and commissioned officers, and these differences are reflected in their theatrical repertoire. Additionally, we must also take into account that the officers came from different social backgrounds and education, which is reflected in their theatrical repertoire.

In his study of Napoleon's officer corps, Jean-Paul Bertaud notes that while popular conceptions of an egalitarian, classless military system of the Revolution prevail, the situation is actually much more nuanced.[38] Broadly speaking, the revolutionary Army of the Republic of the 1790s did away with many of the coventions and rules governing the military of the *ancien régime*.[39]

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[37] In the Napoleonic era, the French military was rough divided into two major ranks: officers and the rank and file. The rank and file fell into two categories: *sous-officiers* and *soldats*, or non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and regular soldiers. NCOs occupied a middling position between the commissioned ranks and private soldiers, though they were normally lumped together with the latter to separate them from the normal officer corps. With some variation according to the branch of service, the ranks of NCOs in the infantry included the following grades, from lowest to highest: *sergent*, *sergent-major*, and *adjudant-sous-officier*. In the cavalry, NCO ranks had different titles. A *maréchal des logis* performed the functions of a *sergent*, and the *maréchal des logis chef* those of a *sergent-major*. *Fourriers*, corporals, and brigadiers, the cavalry equivalent of a corporal, occupied a rung below these positions. They were not technically *sous-officiers*, but they did exercise a supervisory and leadership role equivalent to that of noncomissioned officers. NCOs, as well as corporals, brigadiers, and *fourriers*, assisted officers in their duties, commanded and looked after the men assigned to their units, and were responsible for training, discipline and supply duties. For a general break-down of the ranks and functions in Napoleon's army see Ray Johnson, *Napoleonic Armies: A Wargamer's Campaign Directory, 1805-1815* (London: Arms and Armour, 1984). For French NCO ranks and their functions, see John Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), p. 676; Pigeard, *L'Armée Napoléonienne* (Paris: Curandera, 1993), pp. 501-12.

[38] Jean-Paul Bertaud, 'Napoleon's Officers', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), p. 94.

[39] For a discussion of changing notions of 'honour' in the French army from the Revolution to Empire see John Lynn, 'Toward an Army of Honor: The Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (Spring, 1989), 152-73; also see Owen Connelly, 'A Critique of John Lynn's 'Toward an Army of Honor: The

However, with the outset of the Consulate, and subsequent Empire, many of the old conventions were replaced or adopted to suit Napoleon's agenda. Historians have noted Napoleon's gradual purging of the officer corps during the Consulate between 1799 and 1801. Rafe Blaufarb notes that the winnowing of the aging and infirm in this period 'tended to fall disproportionately on those officers, generally of modest social background, who had begun their military careers as soldiers during the Old Regime'.[40] Bertaud points out a certain snobbery in Napoleon's preference for officers from more elevated backgrounds, reflecting his assumption that recruits in the lower echelons of society could only yield meager returns.[41]

Education played an increasingly important part in officer recruitment and advancement. Officers with a distinguished education were praised by the inspectors and noted as likely subjects for promotion to superior rank.[42] Analysis of the registers of the Ecole spéciale militaire during the Consulate and Empire reveals that a full one-third of the students were drawn from the familiies and clients of *grands notables*.[43] Although Napoleon's officer corps was formally meritocratic, it was also highly elitist.[44] We can be fairly certain that the majority of the officers from Bailen came from the high social backgrounds, and even if

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Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815'', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989), 174-79.

[40] Rafe Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 166-67.

[41] Bertaud, 'Officers', p. 94; Blaufarb, pp. 166-67.

[42] Adrien Dansette, *Napoléon: pensées politiques et sociales* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), p. 288.

[43] Families of landowners furnished 11 percent of the students, commercial and financial families another 11 percent, and the liberal professions 6 percent. There were no peasants, and the artisan classes were almost completely absent, represented by only a handful of the most prestigious trades (jewelry, clock-making, book-selling, etc). In Chapter 10 we will explore the prevalence of theatre in military schools and colleges that provide a backdrop to the officer's parole theatricals. Blaufarb, pp. 166-67. David D. Bien, 'Military Education in Eighteenth-Century France: Technical and Non-Technical Determinants', *Science, Technology, and Warfare* (1971), 51-69; for general reference see also Frederick Artz, *The Development of Technical Education in France, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1966), pp. 112-81.

[44] Blaufarb, p. 176; see also Pierre Bourdieu, *La Noblesse d'état: grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1989); Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton, 1990).

they did not, upon entering the officer corps, they would have been invested into a milieu that prized more elitist social and cultural values.

Comparing playbills from the 'rank and file' theatricals at Portchester Castle and those of commissioned officers in parole towns reveals a distinctive difference that was most likely determined by social background. While the rank and file are performing boulevard melodrama, the 'French gentlemen officers' are performing more high-brow genres of tragedy and comedy, *ancien régime* classics such as Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui* (*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, 1666), Voltaire's *La Mort de César* (*The Death of Cesar*, 1735), Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (*The Barber of Seville,* 1775).[45] While the repertoire reflects the tastes and experiences of the officers' more elevated social backgrounds, in Chapter 10 I will argue that other factors were at play in their theatricals, including sociaibility within parole towns, and that the plays also interacted in larger Anglo-French cultural dynamics of the age.

Conscription

A year before the French defeat at the Battle of Bailen, Napoleon lost nearly 15,000 men at the Battle of Eylau, again in June 1807 at the Battle of Friedland, the French lost up to 12,000 soldiers.[46] One of the costs of Napoleon's continental campaigns was an almost constant demand for manpower on the battlefield. If Napoleon was going to be successful in forcing the British out of Spain, he needed a strong military presence there. The answer to this problem of lack of manpower was conscription.

[45] Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum: Playbill; National Archives Scotland (NAS): MS 5.792 (70): A description of plays acted by French prisoners on parole at Kelso in July 1811. Mechele Leon discusses concepts of 'high' and 'low' perceptions of Molière's plays during the French Revolution. See Mechele Leon, *Molière, the French Revolution and the Theatrical Afterlife* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2009), pp. 34-48. Napoleon's 1806 decree on theatres formally establishes tragedy and comedy exclusively in the repertoire of the Comédie-Française (renamed the Théâtre-Français).

[46] Chandler suggests that casualties may have been as high as 25,000 but concedes the actual number cannot be determined. See Chandler, p. 548.

Conscription had existed in France since the Loi Jourdan came into effect on 5 September 1798.[47] The so-called Loi Jourdan decreed that all unmarried men other than sole breadwinners, government officials, priests, and the physically unfit, would become liable for military service at the age of twenty in accordance with a quota system filled by ballot.[48] In the levy of 1806 and 1807, young men aged 20 to 25 faced mandatory conscription from across France. As noted earlier, General Dupont's Second Corps of Observation of the Gironde Spain marching into Spain in 1807 consisted largely of Régiments Provisoires, or Legions of Reserve.[49] As conscripts the group of prisoners taken at Bailen, sent to Cabrera and eventually to Portchester provide a colourful array of cultural backgrounds—bakers, soldiers, carpenters, apothecaries, doctors, and even actors, musicians, dancers and a theatre *machiniste*. Of the memoirists included in this study, Louis Wagré was a baker from Compiegne, Louis Gille was a former art student from Paris, and Sébastien Blaze was an *apothicaire* from Avignon. Others included Jean-François Carré, a *machiniste* at the Opéra-Comique, Pierre Perret, a dancer at the Opéra, and Marc-Antoine Corret, a horn-player trained at the Conservatoire.[50] These prisoners not only add a dynamic range of skills and talents into the theatrical milieu, they are also representative of a cross-section of ordinary Parisians,[51] and as such, they provide a fresh and entirely unique perspective on Parisian life, culture, and theatre of the Napoleonic era that has not been considered before.

Garde de Paris

[47] Harold D. Blanton, 'Conscription in France During the Era of Napoleon', in *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era: A Revolution in Military Affairs?,* ed. Donald Stoker, Frederick C. Schneid and Harold D. Blanton (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 6-23 (p. 9).
[48] Blanton, p. 9.
[49] It contained three infantry Divisions and a cavalry Division. The infantry Divisions were formed mainly from the Legions of Reserve and the Garde de Paris, bolstered by some Swiss units and a battalion of Marines of the Guard. The Cavalry Division of two brigades was formed from five provisional cavalry regiments. See Partridge and Oliver, p. 21.
[50] TNA: ADM 103/333; Pierre Perret is mentioned in Sébastien Blaze, p. 153.
[51] As we shall see in the next section, the theatre *société* at Portchester Castle was predominately comprised of soldiers from Paris.

From the prison registers for Portchester Castle held at Kew, it becomes clear that the majority of the prisoners running the theatre *société* were from Paris and served in the Garde de Paris. This strong nexus of Parisan *sociétaires* gives the theatre and its repertoire a particularly cosmopolitan flavour. At the same time, it highlights divisions and prejudices rife in France between Parisian and provincial theatres throughout the nineteenth century.[52]

The Garde municipale de Paris was created on 4th October 1802, organised into two regiments of infantry, each of two battalions of five companies, and a single squadron of cavalry (also known as the Dragons de Paris) of two companies.[53] On 18th May 1806, Napoleon's Imperial Decree dictated that the name would be changed to Garde de Paris, and in November 1807 two battalions under Major Estève including 27 officers and 914 regular infantry were sent to join Dupont's corps, which crossed into Spain on 19th November.[54]

Natalie Petiteau points out that troop cohesion proved a significant source of strength, and that in most cases men from similar backgrounds and regions were kept together. She notes that the sense of cohesion reinforced by the fact that French conscripts 'of each *classe* were enlisted in cohorts rather than being divided randomly across the regiments'.[55] Conscripts often came to the army with others from the same locality, and therefore, they were not faced with total isolation. The result, she suggests, is that the break from their community of origin was only a partial one.[56] When marching off to war soldiers 'continued to hear the accents of their vernacular tongue or stories born of a common past, and

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[52] For a discussion of provincial theatres in France during the Empire see Cyril Triolaire, *Le théâtre en province: pendant le Consulat et l'Empire* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2012).

[53] The total effective strength was 2,150 soldiers and 150 horses. Emmanuel Martin, *La Garde de Paris, 1802-1813* (Paris: J. Leroy, 1903), pp. 1-7; Digby Smith, *Napoleon's Regiments: Battle Histories of the Regiments of the French Army, 1792-1815* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000), p. 210.

[54] See Gille, p. 14.

[55] Natalie Petiteau, 'Survivors of War: French Soldiers and Veterans of the Napoleonic Armies', in *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 43-58 (p. 47).

[56] Petiteau, p. 47.

be alongside men who had the same customs as they did, knew the same places, and had common points of reference'. Whether singing along to popular songs from vaudeville or performing well-known melodramas from the boulevard du Temple, theatre served as one of these 'common points of reference' uniting the soldiers, and eventually, prisoners, in their 'common past'.[57]

However, not all the soldiers shared the same 'customs' or 'knew the same places'. Not all the prisoners taken at Bailen were French. While the vast majority of Dupont's army in Spain was drawn from French-born conscripts and career soldiers, we know that the army consisted of approximately 2,500 Swiss soldiers as well as Piedmontese, Swiss and Hanovarian troops.[58] Equally, Quantin mentions that despite the fact that the soldiers were broadly considered 'rank and file', within their own ranks he found a 'mélange des diverses classes' ['mixture of diverse classes'] of soldiers ranging from peasants to artisans.[59]

In the memoirs of the prisoners from Bailen we find a distinctly cosmopolitan bias. For instance, in his description of the theatricals at the Isla de Leon, Blaze notes, 'ils donnaient aux représentations dramatiques un brillant éclat, que n'ont pas toujours nos théâtres de province' ['they gave to their dramatic performances a brilliance that our provincial theatres do not always possess'].[60] Blaze himself was from Avignon, so his comment is perhaps more of a commentary on the discrepancy between theatricals in Paris and those in Provence. Of the Cabrera theatre, Gille passes comment that the theatricals seemed to provide more amusement for Parisians, and less for those prisoners 'qui n'avaient jamais habité les villes' ['who had never lived in the cities'].[61] These demographics underline cultural divisions in France in the early nineteenth century, divisions between the capital and the provinces. These divisions

[57] Petiteau, p. 47.
[58] Ray Johnson, *Napoleonic Armies: A Wargammer's Campaign Directory, 1805-1815* (London: Arms and Armour, 1984), p. 18-19.
[59] Quantin, I, p. 8.
[60] Blaze, p. 183.
[61] See Gille, pp. 210-11.

amongst the prisoners—urban versus provincial, officer versus rank and file—colour both the choice of repertoire and issues of audience and reception.[62]

The Parisian prisoners appear to impress their cultural stamp on the theatre wherever possible. At San Carlos, for instance, Ducor tells us that the marionette theatre is decorated with 'ces souvenirs de la patrie' ['memories of our homeland'] complete with 'des principaux monuments de la France' ['the principle monuments of France']. However, I question whether these are 'souvenirs' of the 'patrie' or of Paris in particular. A little later in his description, Ducor notes that the staging includes 'des hauteurs de Montmartre' ['the heights of Montmartre'].[63] Again at Portchester Castle, the theatre is decorated with 'souvenirs de Paris' ['memories of Paris']. Even at Cabrera, the prisoners rename their improvised market, the Palais-Royal, a famous district of Paris. Theatre served as a way to build a community within the prison camp drawn together around 'common points of reference' whether performing plays that were highly successful in Paris, or evoking memories of home through decoration and staging.[64]

[62] The role of women in the Peninsular Wars is finally receiving due consideration. See Thomas Cardoza, *Intrepid Women: Cantinières and Vivandières of the French Army* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010) and Charles Esdaile, *Women in the Peninsular War* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).
[63] Ducor, pp. 138-39.
[64] Petiteau, p. 47.

Chapter 3

PRISONERS OF WAR AND *LE GOÛT DU THÉÂTRE*

As we saw in the last chapter, most of the *sociétaires* at Cabrera and Portchester Castle served in regiments of the Garde de Paris, and were born and raised in Paris.[1] The majority of these men were between the ages of 21 to 34 when they arrived at Portchester Castle in the summer of 1810,[2] meaning that they would have been born between 1776 and 1789, and therefore would have been witness to the momentous changes taking place in Paris theatres in the 1790s and early 1800s.

The theatrical landscape of Paris was rapidly changing in the 1790s. On 13 January 1791, the National Assembly in Paris passed the Loi Le Chapelier which, among other things, ended the monopoly of the Comédie-Française by opening free enterprise, effectively allowing anyone to open a new theatre.[3] Prior to 1791, there were only three officially recognised theatres in Paris which had enjoyed a monopoly on the classical repertoire and the 'high genres' for over a century.[4] After 1791, however, theatres were effectively free to perform works

[1] Registers of prisoners of war at Portchester Castle may be found at TNA: ADM 103/315-340.

[2] Jean-François Carré is recorded as 21 years old and Guillaume Breton is listed as 31. This information is taken from the registers for prisoners at Portchester Castle are held at TNA: ADM 103/315-340.

[3] For general history of French Revolutionary and Empire theatre refer to Pierre Frantz, *Le Siècle des théâtres: salles et scènes en France, 1748-1807* (Paris: Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris, 1999) and 'Le Théâtre sous l'Empire: entre deux révolutions', in *L'Empire des Muses: Napoléon, les Arts et les Lettres,* ed. Jean-Claude Bonnet (Paris: Belin, 2004), pp. 173-197; Emmet Kennedy, *Theatre, Opera and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (London: Greenwood, 1996); Donald Roy and Victor Emeljanow, *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Cyril Triolaire, *Le Théâtre en province: pendant le Consulat et l'Empire* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2012). For general reference on Paris theatres during this period, see Nicole Wilde, *Dictionnaire des théâtres parisiens au XIXe siècle: les théâtres et la musique* (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1989).

[4] These were the Opéra (Académie de Musique), the Comédie-Française, and the Comédie-Italienne. See Nicolas-Etienne Framery, *De l'organisation des spectacles de Paris, ou Essai sur leur forme actuelle sur les moyens de l'améliorer, par rapport au publique et aux acteurs* (Paris: Buisson, 1790). The relationship of licensed and

and genres formerly off limits to all but the three licensed houses, and by the end of the 1790s nearly fifty new theatres had opened in the capital alone,[5] mostly along the Boulevard du Temple, and it is here that popular genres of vaudeville and melodrama came to prominence.[6] In 1806, the year that many of the prisoners were conscripted into the Grande Armée, Napoleon was busy tightening his grip on the theatres of Paris, signing the famous Imperial decree that limited the swelling number of theatres in the capital to just twelve.[7] A year later, in 1807, he signed another decree limiting the number of theatres to just eight.[8]

The prisoners' repertoire strongly resembles the trends and fashions of Paris theatre in the early 1800s. Overall, and in the most simplistic terms, theatrical trends of Paris between 1789 and 1806 (the year many of the soldiers left Paris for conscription) saw an increased demand for and popularity of *grand spectacle,* allowing pantomime, *féerie*, and melodrama to flourish in the

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unlicensed theatres at the end of the eighteenth century is treated in Michèle Root-Bernstein, *Boulevard Theatre and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984).

[5] Mark Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opéra, 1789-1794* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 26.

[6] For a general overview of 'popular' theatre in nineteenth-century France see John McCormick, *Popular Theatres of Nineteenth-Century France* (London: Routledge, 1993). For descriptions of *petits théâtres* in Paris see Nicholas Brazier, *Chroniques des petits théâtres de Paris, depuis leur création jusqu'à ce jour* (Paris: [s.n.], 1837). In addition to Emmet Kennedy's repertoire of the 1790s, see also André Tissier, *Les spectacles à Paris pendant la Révolution: répertoire analytique, chronologique et bibliographique: de la réunion des États généraux à la chute de la royauté: 1789-1792* (Genève: Droz, 1992).

[7] Under the 1806 decree no theatre is to be established without government authorisation; the monopoly of the three state-supported theatres, ended by the decree of 1791, is reasserted. Frederic William John Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. x.

[8] Under the 1807 decree Parisian theatres were divided into two groups: *Grands théâtres* including the Théâtre Français (formerly the Comédie-Française), the Théâtre de l'Impératrice, as an annex of the Théâtre Français, the Théâtre de l'Opéra (Académie impériale de Musique), and the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique. The second group were the *Théâtres secondaires* including the Théâtre du Vaudeville, the Théâtre des Variétés, the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, and the Théâtre de la Gaîté. The decree is reprinted in French in Nicole Wild, *Dictionnaire des théâtres parisiens au XIXe siècle: les théâtres et la musique* (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1989), pp. 13-14. An English version of the 1807 decree is cited in Donal Roy and Victor Emaljenow, *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 270-72.

boulevard theatres. The period from the early 1790s onward also saw the rise in demand for *vaudevilles*. While it is difficult to define the prisoners' theatricals in simplified categories there are some broad observations that can be made about the repertoire and the ways it interacted with the broader theatrical milieu of France between the 1791 Loi Le Chapelier and Napoleon's decrees of 1806 and 1807, at which point most of the prisoners of this study would have already been away from Paris on the march to Spain.

Changements à vue and the Taste for Spectacle

With the deregulation of theatres in 1791, new and exisiting boulevard theatres found themselves in an increasingly competitive market vying for new audiences. One way of drawing new audiences to a theatre was to promise new and innovative spectacle.[9] With innovations in theatre architecture and stage machinery in the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, French theatre began producing larger, and more spectacular spectacle to draw audiences. Gradually throughout the 1780s and 90s, several new theatres had been built along the boulevard du Temple in Paris. These theatres developed a spectacular array of theatre presenting pantomimes, *féeries*, and melodrama complete with music and ballets, along with increasingly spectacular effects such as scene changes, trap doors, fly lifts, explosions, and aquatic drama.[10]

To illustrate this we can look at one of the most successful single plays of the 1790s, Cuvelier de Trie and Hapdé's *féerie*, *Le Petit Poucet, ou, L'Orphelin de la forêt* (1798), with over 156 performances at the Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes.[11] Gille notes that the prisoners performed *Le Petit Poucet* at Portchester Castle and is one of the best examples of *grand spectacle* incorporating 'les changements de costumes à vue' along with lifts and trap doors.[12] The conclusion

[9] For a discussion of the commercial demands on theatre in eighteenth-century France see Lauren Clay, *Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2013).
[10] For a discussion on the rise of féerie plays in Paris see Roxane Martin, *La Féerie romantique sur les scenes parisiennes, 1791–1864* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007).
[11] Kennedy, p. 132.
[12] Gille, p. 271.

of *Le Petit Poucet* is pure *grand spectacle* at its finest as the stage directions illustrate in the final apotheosis scene:

> Les tigres se précipitent sur Barbastal; la foudre tombe; la terre s'ouvre; ils sont engloutis avec le tyran dont ils déchirent le sein; alors les murs et colonnes de l'arene s'écroulent avec un bruit effrayant au milieu d'une pluie de feu; Rosaure et son fils montent dans le char de la Fée, et s'élancent avec elle dans les airs […][13]
>
> [The tigers rush toward Barbastal; lightning crashes; the ground opens and swallows the tyrant whose breast they are tearing apart; Then the walls and columns of the arena collapse with a frightful noise in the midst of a rain of fire; Rosaure and her son climb into the fairy's chariot, and are whisked away into the air.]

In Chapter 7, we will discuss how this might have been staged at Portchester Castle. Looking solely at the advertisements for certain plays of the period, we see a growing trend for ever-more spectacular staging. For instance, at the Théâtre de la Gaité, a three-act pantomime, *Les Chevaliers du soleil, ou, amour et dangers* (1801) advertised *à grand spectacle* with 'décors, machines, costumes, marche triomphale, pompe funèbre, danses, combats à outrance, siège par mer et par terre, évolutions militaires, illuminations, incendie, explosion, démolition, etc' ['decorations, machines, costumes, triumphant marches, funeral pomp, dances, extreme combat, sieges by land and sea, military evolutions, illuminations, fire, explosions, demolitions, etc.'], while an 1804 production of *Le Prince invisible, ou, Arlequin prothée* promised to be 'mêlée de pantomime, ornée de chants, marches, combats, évolutions militaires et dix-sept travestissemens à vue' ['mixed pantomimes, ornamented songs, marches,

[13] J.-G.-A. Cuvelier et J.-B. Hapdé, *Le Petit Poucet, ou, L'Orphelin de la forêt: drame en cinq actes et en prose, mêlé de chants, pantomime et danses* (Paris: Chez Fages, 1802). The play premiered on 14 March 1798. The first edition published in 1802.

combats, military evolutions, and seventeen changes of view']. [14] The advertisements illustrate a growing trend in Empire theatre where music and visual elements arguably become more important than speech in conveying the drama and emotion.[15]

Playwright René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844) fused *grand spectacle* and emotion along with dramatic music, songs, and spoken dialogue forging a genre of melodrama that would flourish in the boulevard theatres of Paris for the first two decades of the nineteenth century.[16] On 2 September 1800, Pixérécourt's new play, *Cœlina, ou l'Enfant du mystère* opened at the théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique on the boulevard du Temple, billed as a *drame* 'en prose et à grand spectacle'[17] and sparked a craze for melodrama. During the Empire period, Pixérécourt penned dozens of melodramas for the Ambigu-Comique, the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin and the Théâtre de la Gaîté.[18]

In their mordant critique of the genre, the authors of the *Traité du Mélodrame* (1817) highlight the centrality of spectacle in melodrama, pointing

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[14] Bignon, *Les Chevaliers du soleil, ou, amour et dangers* (Paris: Barba, 1801); Hapdé, *Le Prince invisible, ou, Arlequin protée* (Paris: Barba, 1804).

[15] Katherine Astbury, 'Music in Pixérécourt's Early Melodramas', in *Melodramatic Voices: Understanding Music Drama*, ed. Sarah Hibberd (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 15-26.

[16] A standard introduction and overview of the genre is Jean-Marie Thomasseau, *Le Mélodrame* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984). In the same period, Jean-Marie Thomasseau completed his lengthy thesis, 'Le mélodrame sur les scènes parisiennes de *Cœlina* (1800) à *L' Auberge des Adrets* (1823)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Lille-III, 1974), which is by far the most analytical study to date of the early French melodrama, recovering a wide range of unfamiliar texts. One of the standard critical works on melodrama is Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination. Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).

[17] Pixérécourt, *Cœlina, ou l'Enfant du mystère* (Paris: J. N. Barba, 1800). Jean-Marie Thomasseau points out that the term mélodrame dates back to the eighteenth century with Laurent Garcins' *Traité du Mélodrame* (1762). The term 'mélo-drame' was also used to describe Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (1775) at the Comédie-Française.

[18] Pixérécourt followed the success of *Cœlina* with a host of new melodramas including *La Femme à deux maris* (1802) at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique. Both *Cœlina* and *La Femme à deux maris* were among the most popular melodramas to be performed in Paris and the provinces of France in the first decade of the nineteenth century. According to figures provided by Pixérécourt himself, *Cœlina* had 387 performances in Paris and 1,089 in the provinces while *La Femme à deux maris* had 451 performances in Paris and 895 in the provinces. Cited in *Théâtre choisi de Guilbert de Pixérécourt,* I, ed. Charles Nodier (Paris: Tresse, 1841), pp. 57, 61.

out: 'On placera un ballet et un tableau général dans le premier acte […] combats, chansons, incendie, etc., dans le troisième' ['place a ballet and general tableau in the first act […] fighting, songs and fire etc. in the third'].[19] In addition to 'an indulgence of strong emotionalism […] overt villainy, persecution of the good, and final reward of virtue; inflated and extravagant expression; dark plottings, suspense, breathtaking peripety',[20] melodrama offered music and dance, 'ballet' or 'tableau' not to mention spectacular staging effects with 'combats, chansons, incendie' all equally entwined in the overall emotional dynamic of the performance.[21]

Wherever possible, the prisoners from Bailen make every attempt to mirror this trend for producing theatre *à grand spectacle*. On the Isla de Leon, Ducor describes *Le Maniaque supposé, ou le Déluge universel* as 'hydrolico-tragi-comédie-parade, avec tableaux, ouvertures et changements de décors à vue'.[22] The description is perhaps comprehensible for a boulevard theatre in Paris with the funding and resources, but it is quite astonishing to imagine this level of spectacle in an improvised theatre in a prisoner-of-war camp. At Portchester Castle, Quantin writes that they were able to perform melodrama, pantomime, and féerie with 'changements à vue, démolitions, apparitions, danses, combats'.[23] For the prisoners, the literary or thematic message of a play was only part of the experience. Spectacle allowed the prisoners—notably *machiniste* Jean-Françoise Carré—to flex their creative and technical muscles. No doubt the theatricals were designed to dazzle and entertain the prisoners, but at the same time, there is a sense that spectacle also served as a form of cultural showmanship. At Portchester Castle, Gille notes that the prisoners 'désirant faire briller [leur] talent[s] aux yeux des Anglais' ['wanted to make their talents shine in the eyes of the English'].[24] Spectacle not only served as a way to entertain and distract prisoners from the banality of prison life, it also showcased the prisoners'

[19] Abel Hugo, Armand Malitourne, J. Ader, *Traité du Mélodrame* (Paris: Delaunay, 1817), pp. 9-10.
[20] Brooks, p. 11.
[21] Hugo, Malitourne, Ader, pp. 9-10.
[22] Ducor, p. 141.
[23] Quantin, II, p. 136.
[24] Gille, pp. 267-68.

own ingenuity. In this way, the prisoners used spectacle to demonstrate to their captors that they had not succumbed to the horrors of ennui imposed upon them.

Vaudeville

Vaudeville is by far the most prevalent genre in the prisoner-of-war repertoire. There are 32 recorded performances of vaudevilles at Portchester Castle between September 1810 and January 1811. Scripts survive for two vaudevilles written by the prisoners *Les Etrennes du cœur* [*The Heart's New Year Gift*] and *La Fête du Protecteur* [*The Protector's Birthday*].[25] Taken together, the memoirists each mention various vaudevilles that were performed including *Le Désespoir de Jocrisse* (1793), *Le Billet de logement* (1799) and *Monsieur Vautour* (1805). Quantin lists a further 12 that may have been performed.[26]

Henri Rossi points out that vaudevilles initially emerged as early as the sixteenth century as 'une chanson satirique et populaire, souvent triviale, adaptée aux circonstances politiques et sociales' ['satiric and popular songs, often trivial, adapted to political and social circumstances'].[27] Hocquart's dictionary defines 'vaudeville' as 'petit opéra sur des airs connus' ['short opera based on familiar tunes'][28] while Jean-Charles Laveaux describes them as 'une petite comédie dans laquelle le dialogue est entremêlé de vaudevilles' ['short comedies with spoken

[25] *Les Etrennes du cœur* (French version) at V&A: THM/415/1/1 and *The Heart's New Year Gift* (English version) at V&A: THM/415/1/7; *La Fête du Protecteur* (French version) at THM/415/1/2 and *The Protector's Birthday* (English translation) at V&A: THM/415/1/9. The English titles are those given by the prisoners.

[26] Quantin's list includes: *Les Chevilles de Maître Adam, Monsieur Vautour, Monsieur Guillaume, La Bouffe et le tailleur, Le Château d'If, Vadé a la grenouillère, Fanchon la vielleuse, La Leçon de botanique, Le Billet de logement, La Fête de Lise, Le Piège* and *Le Heureuse Etourdourie*. See Quantin, II, p. 147-48 ; Sébastien Blaze also mentions that a vaudeville *La Femme en loterie* was written at the Isla de Leon, see Blaze, p. 184.

[27] Henri Rossi, 'Figures historiques dans le vaudeville: entre apologie et dérision', in *Figures de l'histoire de France dans le théâtre au tournant des Lumières: 1760-1830,* ed. Paul Mironneau and Gérard Lahouati (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007), pp. 335-47 (p. 335).

[28] Hocquart, *Petit dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Langlumé et Peltier, 1837), p. 459.

dialogue interspersed with singing'].[29] The action was always minimal, generally little more than a slight development of a given situation or character.[30]

In 1792 the théâtre du Vaudeville opened on the Rue de Chartres created by five men: Yves Barré, Antoine Piis, Guillaume Desfontaines, Jean-Baptiste Radet and François Léger.[31] While theatres had often been in the practice of incorporating single vaudevilles into their programme, the Théâtre du Vaudeville was devoted entirely to the genre. The Vaudeville would go on to stage some of the most successful vaudevilles of the age including Beffroy de Reigny's *Nicodème dans la lune* (1790, 266 performances), Barré, Radet and Desfontaine's *La Chaste Suzanne* (1793), and later *Monsieur Guillaume* (1800), *Fanchon vielleuse* (1803), and *La Leçon botanique* (1804).[32]

The prisoners' repertoire mirrors the overriding trend in Paris in the 1790s and early 1800s where vaudeville became one of the most prevalent genres, and would continue creating 'chanson satirique et populaire' ['satirical and political songs'] and adapting the 'circonstances politiques et sociales' ['political and social circumstances'].[33] As Napoleon's private secretary recalled later in his memoir, the théâtre du Vaudeville had become a 'théâtre sur lequel la gloire française était souvent célébrée dans des pièces patriotiques' ['stage in which the glory of France was often celebrated in patriotic plays'].[34] During the Revolution and throughout the 1790s, the Vaudeville played a crucial part in

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[29] Jean-Charles Leveaux, *Dictionnaire raisonné des difficultés grammaticales et littéraires de la langue française* (Paris: Hachette, 1847), p. 714.
[30] McCormick, p. 116.
[31] Yves Barré was the formal director of the Vaudeville, a former laywer and parliamentary clerk whose brother was in active service to the queen. During the ancien régime, Barré had established a reputation as a plywright. Antoine Piis had an illustrious career. Born into a well-placed Parisian family, Piis had written songs under the ancien régime while enjoying the patronage of the Comte d'Artois. Johanna Danciu focused her doctoral thesis on vaudeville, and has recently published 'Le Vaudeville joue et se joue: allégorie, métathéâtralité et politisation à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et au début du XIXe siècle', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, 265 (2015), 77–94.
[32] *Monsieur Guillaume* (1800), *Fanchon vielleuse* (1803), and *La Leçon botanique* (1804) were all performed at Portchester Castle. See Quantin, pp. 147-48 and V&A: THM /415/2/18.
[33] Rossi, p. 335. For a disussion on the political uses of vaudeville during the Revolution see Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1996).
[34] Claude-François de Méneval, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Napoléon Ier depuis 1802 jusqu'à 1815*, II (Paris: Dentu, 1893-94), p. 53.

bolstering patriotic sentiments. As Pierre Barré, one of the founders of the theatre wrote, 'le genre du Vaudeville peut servir autant que tout autre à propager les principes républicains, et à maintenir l'esprit public' ['The genre of vaudeville can serve as much as any other to propagate republican principles, and to maintain the public spirit'].[35] With the rise of Consulate and Empire, vaudeville became a powerful tool in Napoleonic propaganda.

Cyril Triolaire points out that throughout the Empire period theatre in France had become 'une scène d'expression politique' ['a scene of political expression'].[36] Under the Empire, 'le théâtre concourt à une véritable esthétique de la gloire et Napoléon sollicite directement les artistes pour chanter ses louanges' ['the theater contributed to an aesthetic of glory and Napoleon directly solicited artists to sing his praises'].[37] Triolaire argues that the stage was used to illustrate the glory of Napoleon the conqueror, the liberator, and the brave as an ardent defender of the homeland and model for all the French, but most importantly, for the young soldiers of the Grande Armée marching off to war.[38] Napoleon himself was a regular theatregoer, and was quick to harness the power of theatre and spectacle for propaganda, and for arousing nationalistic sentiments.[39] In 1805, Napoleon employed Barré, Radet and Desfontaine of the théâtre du Vaudeville to produce propaganda for his troops at Boulogne in preparation for an invasion of Britain.[40] The acting troupe from the Vaudeville

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[35] Pierre Barré preface to Barré and Radet, 'L'Heureuse Décade', 2nd edn. in *RTR*, 2 (1790), p. 31. Barré was the fourth most successful playwright of the decade. See Kennedy, p. 90.

[36] Cyril Triolaire, *Le théâtre en province: pendant le Consulat et l'Empire* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2012), p. 385.

[37] Triolaire, p. 385. Susan Valladares has examined the political and cultural staging of the Peninsular Wars on the English stage in *Staging the Peninsular War: English Theatres, 1807-1815* (London: Routledge, 2016). For French and Spanish perceptions see María Salgues, 'Españoles y Franceses en el teatro de la guerra: visiones reciprocas', in *Théâtre et politique pendant la Guerre d'Independence espagnole: 1808-1814,* ed. Claude Dumas (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1988), pp. 267-83.

[38] Triolaire, pp. 385-414.

[39] Michael Hughes studies the ways in which Napoleon fashioned a complex array of materials, including written and print media, songs, and plays to create a new military culture that would embodied his goals and values. See Michael Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York University Press, 2012), p. 25; also see Robert Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950).

[40] Holtman, pp. 157-61.

travelled to Boulogne where they temporarily renamed themselves Théâtre aux armées between 17 August and 1 September 1805.[41]

The fact that vaudevilles were often patriotic or pro-Napoleonic may have served to bolster troop morale or what many historians and military specialists refer to as *l'esprit de corps*. More than one memoirist notes that the vaudevilles and songs lifted their spirits, reminding them of home. Ducor writes 'nous eûmes bientôt des concerts réglés dans lesquels on exécutait plusieurs de nos airs nationaux qui nous électrisaient toujours: dans le sentiment qu'ils éveillaient, il y avait la France et Napoléon' ['We soon had regular concerts in which we performed several of our national tunes, which always electrified us: in the feelings they awakened, France and Napoleon were always present'].[42] Gille recalls how the popular vaudeville brought the prisoners together in song: 'Chacun se retira enchanté du spectacle et des acteurs et fredonnant comme à la sortie du Vaudeville le refrain de quelques-uns des couplets qu'ils avaient entendus' ['Everyone left enchanted by the spectacle and the actors, and humming as if leaving the Vaudeville theatre the refrains of some of the verses they had heard'].[43] Vaudevilles provided popular songs and airs that the prisoners could enjoy and invariably reminded the prisoners of happier days before the war.

Studies of prisoners of war in World I and II reveal the overwhelming popularity of light entertainments in the form of pantomimes, and popular songs from Gilbert and Sullivan which serve to evoke memories of the past 'shared family experiences, of sing-alongs in the local pub that proved decisive in the struggle for survival when soldiers found themselves uprooted and placed in a world where the future appeared to have no meaning'.[44] Vaudevilles can often easily be dismissed as light entertainments or fillers between longer comedies or pantomimes, and unworthy of critical investigation. While it may at first appear

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[41] Christian Bailleux and Brigitte Loir Chatel, *Le Théâtre du Vaudeville au camp de Boulogne: août-septembre 1805* (Boulogne-sur-Mer: Association Mémoire boulonnaise, 2007); Charles Otton Zieseniss, 'Le théâtre aux armées', *Souvenir Napoleonien* (June 1974), pp. 19-21; Barré, Radet and Desfontaines had secured a pension from Napoleon of 4,000 francs apiece. See Claude-François de Méneval, II, p. 53.
[42] Ducor, p. 246.
[43] Gille, pp. 210-11.
[44] Emeljanow, 'Pantomimes', p. 273.

that the texts themselves hold very little literary value, vaudevilles are nonetheless useful in the study of prisoner-of-war theatricals for what they might reveal about the prisoners' emotional and psychological experiences. Writing about the genre in 1884, critic, historian and amateur vaudevillist Francisque Sarcey describes:

> Le vaudeville, au lieu de s'attaquer aux caractères et aux passions, de les étudier et d'en tirer, avec les effets de rire ou de larmes que le théâtre comporte, un sujet de réflexions profondes et un enseignement, s'attache plutôt soit aux menus faits de la vie courante qu'il embrouille en forme de quiproquo, et démêle ensuite comme il peut sans trop se soucier de la vraisemblance; soit aux légers travers de la vie contemporaine qu'il tourne en ridicule d'une main légère, sans enfoncer trop avant le trait de la raillerie.[45]
>
> [Vaudeville, instead of attacking characters and passions, instead of studying them and taking them as sujects for profound reflection and instruction, along with the laughter or tears that theatre involves, sticks more either to the little facts of everyday life that it mixes up in the form of blunders and unravels afterwards as best it can, without worrying too much about *vraisemblance*, or to the slight upsets of contemporary life that it turns to ridicule with a light hand without driving too far home the stroke of mockery.]

These 'slight upsets of contemporary life' come through in vaudeville, and can provide a unique lens into the prisoners' emotional and psychological experience. The ability to adapt contemporary events and life made vaudeville appealing for prisoners, and also made it an easy and accessible way for them to model their own theatricals. In fact, we see several instances where the prisoners take events from their captivity and mould them into vaudevilles.

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[45] Francisque Sarcey, 'Introduction', *Théâtre choisi de Dancourt* (Paris: Laplace, Sanchez et Cie, 1884), p. xxi.

Anecdotes from prisoners' memoirs suggest that the prisoners of the Isla de Leon incorporated their circumstances into their theatricals. Blaze recalls an amusing incident in which an officer offered his wife in a lottery. According to Blaze tickets were sold and eventually a young sailor won her. The event was later adapted by a *sous-officier* of the *Garde de Paris* into a short vaudeville sketch:

> Elle était encore l'objet des conversations de la colonie, quand un sous-officier de la garde de Paris fit représenter sur le théâtre de San Carlos un vaudeville de sa façon, où les héros de l'aventure étaient mis en scène avec esprit. *La Femme en loterie* eut un succès d'enthousiasme.[46]
>
> [It was still the object of the colony's conversations, when a non-commissioned officer of the guard of Paris had a vaudeville performed on the San Carlos stage, in which the heroes of the adventure were staged with wit. *The Woman in Lottery* was received with enthusiasm.]

Blaze's anecdote reveals that the prisoners were using theatrical representations to reflect events and incidents from their daily lives. In January 1811, the *sociétaires* of Portchester Castle composed short vaudevilles, *La Fête du Protecteur* and *Les Etrennes du cœur* to express gratitude to the prison agent, Captain Paterson for providing materials to build a theatre in the basement of the castle's keep.[47] Knowing that the prisoners were adapting 'the little facts of everyday life' into their repertoire is an important point to consider as it suggests that the theatre-makers have selected a repertoire of plays that bear some relevance to their situation. Looking more closely at these texts themselves we can identify relevant themes, motifs or textual clues that provide an insight into the prisoners' emotional and psychological experiences of captivity.

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[46] Blaze, p. 184; air about loterie; italics in original text. Blaze does not reveal the identity of the wife, officers or *sous-officier*.

[47] *Les Etrennes du Cœur* held at V&A: THM 415/1/1 and *La Fête du Protecteur* V&A: THM/415/1/2.

Drawing the lens back further from vaudeville to encompass the entire repertoire, it is important consider that a majority of the plays staged by the prisoners feature soldiers or military figures. In Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775), the central character Figaro is identified as an ex-soldier, who also happened to spend some time in prison. In fact, the repertoire is full of soldiers going off to or returning from war: the eponymous Philoctète, Crispin in Regnard's *Les Folies amourouses* (1704), Alexis in *Le Déserteur*, and Dalincourt in Léger's *Le Billet de logement* (1799).

As we will see throughout the course of this study, the majority of the plays in the repertoire deal with themes that are central to the prisoners' captivity such as judgement and salvation, captivity and escape, fraternity and betrayal. The fact that many of the plays feature military figures further localises the performances, drawing the prisoners into the cathartic experience, and suggests that theatre played a central role in helping the prisoners to process and assimilate their situation. These are embodiments of the prisoners' themselves, acting out their own concerns, hopes, desires, and fears.

Chapter 4

DYING FOR HOME: TRAUMA, LAUGHTER AND NOSTALGIA

Trauma and Captivity

In the eighteenth century, trauma was still simply a medical term, derived from the Greek, meaning 'wound'. It can be found in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* although its first dictionary appearance in French, as 'traumatique', appears only in the sixth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* in 1835. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have evolved new pedagogies defining and treating trauma and post-traumatic stress (PTS). The most recent diagnostic manual published by the American Psychological Association defines trauma as:

> Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; threat to one's physical integrity, witnessing an event that involves the above experience, learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death, or injury experienced by a family member or close associate.[1]

The harrowing ordeal of the prisoners from the Battle of Bailen took place long before any medication or psycho-analytic language was developed to identiy the trauma of their experience. One prisoners recalls 'Je m'étais abandonné aux réflexions les plus tristes. Je m'étais assis sur une pierre et portai mes regards sur les eaux, mais c'était vainement, rien ne s'offrait à mes yeux qui, malgré moi, se mouillèrent de larmes.' ['I had abandoned myself to the saddest reflections. I sat on a stone and looked at the water, but it was in vain, my eyes could see nothing and, despite myself, grew wet with tears'.][2] While the prisoners may not have had the language to describe the trauma of their experiences, when we look more closely at their experiences of capture and

[1] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edn (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), p. 265-90.
[2] Philippe Gille, *Mémoires d'un conscrit de 1808,* 3rd edn (Paris: Victor-Havard, 1892), p. 240.

imprisonment, we find remarkable similarities to experiences of prisoners of war of the twentieth century that are unquestionably traumatic.

Recent historical research has demystified myths surrounding prisoners-of-war experience created by popular literature and film and exposed the experience as one of 'acute hunger, deadening monotony, and the misery of being beholden to the will of the enemy'.[3] A case-study of British prisoners of war from World War II shows that the soldiers suddenly 'found themselves deracinated and individually helpless as they began the long marches to prisoner-of-war camps', and their arrival at the camp 'marked the beginning of a very different kind of humiliation, as personal belongings were stripped away and as they were reduced to undifferentiated members of a herd: it reinforced the sense of pointlessness and loss of temporality'.[4] The prisoners were simply cut off from the past and faced a future that seemed to have no end in sight.

The prisoners from Bailen faced similar experiences to those British soldiers described over a hundred years later. First, they are marched through the scorching plains of La Mancha in early summer delving deeper into hostile enemy territory where they witness brutal and barbaric guerrilla warfare, a concept unknown in European warfare beforehand. 'Nous apprîmes qu'ils avaient été attaqués par des paysans armés', writes Gille as Dupont's troops moved through Andalucia, 'qu'une grande partie des soldats du train et des canonniers avaient été sabrés sur les pièces plutôt que de les laisser tomber au pouvoir des brigands'. ['We learned they had been attacked by armed peasants [...] that a large number of the soldiers in the train and the cannoniers had been cut down by sabres on their artillery pieces rather than let them fall into the hands of the brigands.][5] These new young conscripts suddenly faced the gruesome horrors of an increasingly brutal and barbaric war. Gille recalls that as his fellow troops approached the town of Manzanares in the plain of La Mancha, Vedel's men were met by a small French troop who reported that a group of

[3] A. Gilbert, *POW: Allied Prisoners in Europe 1939-1945* (London: John Murray, 2006), p. xi.
[4] Victor Emaljenow, 'Popular Entertainments as Survival Strategies in Prisoner-of-War Camps During World War II', in *Trauma and Public Memory,* ed. Christopher Lee and Jane Goodall (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 174-92 (p. 174).
[5] Gille, p. 76.

Dupont's sick soldiers, left behind in the local hospital, had all been slaughtered. Louis Gille visited the hospital later in the day, where he saw fifty unburied French bodies, cruelly tortured, some of them plunged in pots of burning oil.[6]

From the battlefield at Bailen in late-July 1808, the nearly 17,500 French prisoners of war were marched across the plains of Andalucia to be temporarily housed in small villages and towns near Seville where they waited throughout autumn 1808. The prisoners found themselves inhabiting hostile territory, living in constant fear of massacre by locals and guerrilla bandits.[7] Paradoxically, Napoleon's advance through Spain did little to help the prisoners from Bailen, as it merely stoked the already prevalent anti-French sentiments. As Napoleon entered Madrid, the Supreme Central Junta fled back to Seville in November 1808, and gave new orders that the prisoners from Bailen should be marched further south to Cadiz. On Christmas Day 1808 the captives arrived into the port city of Cadiz where they were told that ships awaited them. Marching to Cadiz in December 1808, the prisoners from Bailen joined nearly 2,000 other French prisoners already held in the port city. Henri Ducor was one of this unfortunate group of French sailors blockaded by the Royal Navy in Cadiz in 1805, and later made prisoner on the infamous *pontons,* or unseaworthy vessels, which had been stripped of their masts and anchored in the fetid salt marshes of the Isla de Leon in Cadiz Harbour.[8]

Sources on both sides of the conflict corroborate depicitions of life on board the *pontons* as a daily nightmare.[9] The prisoners were forbidden access to the open rear decks, but were crowded into the dark holds below deck. Ducor

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[6] Gille, p. 76.
[7] Gille, pp. 126-34; Louis-Joseph Wagré, *Les Prisonniers de Cabréra: Souvenirs d'un Caporal de Grenadiers, 1808-1809* (Paris: Emile Paul, 1902), pp. 23-39.
[8] Henri Ducor, *Aventures d'un marin de la Garde Imperiale* (Paris: Ambroise Dupont, 1833), pp. 51-65. For almost three years from 1805 to 1808, Ducor and his fellow sailors lived on board ship in Cadiz Harbour, under protection from the Spanish shore batteries but within sight of the English fleet blockading the outer reaches. In June 1808, however, with the revolt against Joseph Bonaparte, the Spanish shore guns of Cadiz were turned on the French ships sitting in the harbour. When the French refused surrender, they were bombarded for several days. Finally on 14 July they surrendered and Ducor and his compariots found themselves prisoners-of-war, and were transferred to prison hulks.
[9] Joseph Donaldson, *Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier* (London: Richard Griffith, 1859), p. 124; Ducor, p. 57.

describes the hunger, boredom and generally miserable environment of the *pontons*:

> On n'osait pas nous faire mourir de faim; mais on nous distribuait des vivres empoisonnés: c'était du pain de munition, noir et rempli de substances terreuses, du biscuit plein de vers, des viandes salées qui se décomposaient par vétusté, du lard rance et jauni, de la morue gâtée, du riz, des pois et des fèves avariés; point de vin, point de vinaigre; aucun moyen de préparer nos alimens; et pour comble de malheur, par une chaleur excessive et avec une nourriture si propre à exciter la soif, on nous refusait l'eau, ou du moins on nous en donnait en si petite quantité, qu'elle s'absorbait telle que des gouttelettes qui tomberaient sur un fer ardent.[10]
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> [They dared not starve us to death, but they distributed poisoned food: they gave us regulation bread that was black and filled with dirt, biscuits full of worms, salted meats so old they were decomposing, rancid and yellowed bacon, spoiled cod, rotten rice, peas and beans, no wine, no vinegar; no means of preparing our food; and, to compound our misery, in excessive heat and with such food exacerbating our thirst, we were refused water, or at least given it in such small quantities, that it was absorbed like droplets falling on red-hot iron.]

In addition to the appalling state of provision, over 2,000 men were crowded onto hulks designed to house 800 men. Ducor describes the over-crowded, fetid conditions on board the *pontons*:

> […] vers le milieu du jour, étions-nous comme des furieux; partout où nous pouvions aller, comptant y trouver quelque soulagement, nous sentions accroître le tourment du besoin que nous éprouvions. Dans les batteries, c'était une atmosphère épaisse à y étouffer; on y nageait dans la

[10] Ducor, p. 57.

> sueur, dans la respiration les uns des autres, et le jeu des poumons y était horriblement comprimé. Sur le pont, les rayons d'un soleil vertical nous brûlaient la peau, et nous faisaient bouillir le sang.[11]
>
> [By midday, we were going crazy; wherever we went hoping to find some relief, we felt the torment of the need we were suffering increase. On the gun decks, the air was smotheringly thick; we were swimming in sweat, in each other's breath, and our lungs were horribly compressed. On deck, the sun was directly overhead and burned our skin, and made our blood boil.]

Ducor's dramatic descriptions of the horrors of life on board the *pontons* are corroborated by Joseph Donaldson, a British marine on one of the many Royal Navy ships blockading Cadiz, who provides an even more inhumane scenario, reporting that the French prisoners 'were very ill used, nearly starved, and huddled together in such a way that disease was the consequence'. Donaldson reports that bodies of the dead were kept until sunset and 'then thrown overboard, and allowed to float about in the bay. Every tide threw some of them ashore, and the beach was continually studded here and there with them'. When the bodies of the dead were discovered by the Spanish, they would be buried in the sand, 'unless when they practised some barbarity on them — such as dashing large stones on their heads, or cutting and mutilating them in such a way that the very soul would sicken at the idea'.[12] For those French prisoners like Ducor who were already held captive in the hulks at Cadiz, despair followed the news that Dupont's armies had surrendered at Bailen in July 1808; and soon, Ducor reported that, 'j'y vis naître et se propager successivement toutes les espèces de fièvres: la diarrhée, la dysenterie, le typhus, le scorbut' ['I saw all sorts of diseases develop and spread in turn: diarrhoea, dysentery, typhus, scurvy'].[13]

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[11] Ducor, pp. 57-58.
[12] Donaldson, p. 124.
[13] Ducor, pp. 59-61.

Louis-François Gille was one of eighteen hundred prisoners marched to Cadiz in December 1808 and crowded onto the *ponton*, Vainqueur. According to Gille, these 'compagnons d'infortune', crowded onto the *pontons* without any privacy, were 'plongés dans la malpropreté la plus dégoûtante et en proie à ce que la misère a de plus affreux' ['plunged into the most disgusting filth and prey to the most horrible misery'].[14] By March 1809, the local citizenry of Cadiz began to rise against the French prisoners held at the Isla de Leon. The prisoners feared for their lives as an angry mob of locals surrounded the hospital of San Carlos where the French officers and invalids were being held. Meanwhile, the prisoners expected to be repatriated to France as per the terms of Dupont's surrender yet when ships arrived in the harbour in April 1809, they did not transport the prisoners home, rather, they were sent to a remote desert island where they found a complete lack of shelter, food, and fresh water. As we will see, many died from rampant disease, the hostile elements, or malnourishment, not to mention plagued by extreme homesickness, depression, and ennui.

More than half of the prisoners were left on the *pontons* of the Isla de Leon, while the rest were transported to the island of Cabrera. In March 1810, the French officers held in quarantine in Palma were brutally massacred by an angry mob as they were evacuated to Cabrera. Finally, in July 1810, the officers and *sous-officiers* on Cabrera were forced to abandon their lower ranking comrads as they were transported to England. The rest of the prisoners were left to languish on the island until the summer of 1814.

For nearly six years from July 1808 to May 1814, these prisoners had very little control over their destinies. They were forced to live in horrific conditions under constant threat of mob violence, and with absolutely no indiciation when or if they would ever be released. From the descriptions in memoirs it is clear that prisoners experienced trauma of 'actual or threatened death' along with 'intense fear, helplessness, or horror' which modern psychologists would not hestitate to classify as traumatic experiences.[15] As we see with horrific experiences of World War I, II, the Holocaust, Vietnam, and

[14] Gille, pp. 164-65, 177.
[15] See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edn (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), p. 265.

other episodes of forced imprisonment and internment, the prisoners from the Battle of Bailen turned to theatre to process and cope with the trauma of their captivity.

Laughter as Survival

Among the prisoners held at the Isla de Leon was Auguste Thillaye, the chief surgeon for the *gardes-d'honneur*.[16] Thillaye was born in Paris, the son of a prominent Paris surgeon, Jean-Baptiste Thillaye (1752-1822).[17] On the Isla de Leon sick prisoners were sent to the military hospital of the Isla de Leon under Thillaye's care. In the surgeon's chamber the doctor created his marionette theatre to entertain his patients. According to Ducor, Thillaye practiced 'la médecine de l'esprit' ['mental health'] and worked to improve the demoralized condition of his 'compagnons d'infortune' ['companions in misfortune']. Laughing at the marionette and puppet performance distracted 'ses compagnons d'infortune' which in turn helped 'contribuer à leur santé' ['contributed to their health'].[18]

There have been many studies on the effects of comedy and humour in the prisoner-of-war camps of the twentieth century.[19] Most studies find that humour is an effective means of both control and community-building to help prisoners cope with the trauma of captivity. Abel and Maxwell's study of humour reinforces the positive relationships between humour and self-esteem, arguing that exposure to humorous conditions generates 'a state of mirth' thus producing 'a cognitive-affective shift or a restructuring of the situation so that it

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[16] Auguste Thillaye, *Dissertation topographique sur Cabrera, l'une des îles Baléares* (Paris: Faculté de Médecine de Paris, 1814).
[17] Author of *Traité des bandages et appareils* (Paris, 1815); see Françoise Huguet (ed), *Les professeurs de la Faculté de médecine de Paris: dictionnaire biographique, 1794-1939* (Paris: Institut national de recherche pédagogique, 1991).
[18] Ducor, p. 139.
[19] Linda D. Henman, 'Humor as a Coping Mechanism: Lessons from POWs', *International Journal of Humor Research,* 14:1 (2008), 83-94; Karen Horn, 'Stalag Happy": South African Prisoners of War during World War Two (1939–1945) and their Experience and Use of Humour', *South African Historical Journal*, 63 (2011), 537-52; George Wright-Nooth and Mark Adkin, *Prisoner of the Turnip Heads: Horror, Hunger and Humour in Hong Kong, 1941-1945* (London: Leo Cooper, 1994).

is less threatening'.[20] This theory builds on Henri Bergson, one of the first and most influential theorists of comedy and humour in the twentieth century, who posits that humour is largely aspiration. Bergson writes that comedy 'makes us at once endeavour to appear what we ought to be, what some day we shall perhaps end in being'.[21] In relation to prisoner-of-war theatre, it has been pointed out that prisoners want to appear to be happy in front of their captors. Karen Horn's study of South African prisoners-of-war in World War II found that 'humour was a universal tool that boosted morale, showed defiance, created unity, and to an extent helped POWs accept powerlessness'.[22] In a similar way, Sears Eldredge found that laughter in the prisoner-of-war 'Wonder Bar' theatre in Japan provided Allied prisoners 'a temporary victory over their captors'.[23] Laughter worked to prove to the prisoners and to their captors that they had not succumbed the intensely traumatic experiences of captivity.

Theories and practices regarding the positive correlation between humour and health are prevalent in cultural and medical discourse from Ancient Greece to the eighteenth century.[24] As early as the fourteenth century, Henri de Mondeville, renowned as the 'Father of French Surgery', advocated for the use of laughter to help surgery patients convalesce.[25] In the sixteenth century, surgeon Laurent Joubert wrote the *Traité du ris* (1579) claiming that laughter

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[20] Millicent Abel and Daniel Maxwell, 'Humor and Affective Consequences of a Stressful Task', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology,* 21 (April 2002), 165-90 (pp. 165, 187).

[21] Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 17.

[22] Horn, p. 552.

[23] Sears Eldredge, 'Wonder Bar: Music and Theatre as Strategies for Survival in a Second World War POW Hospital Camp', in *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire,* ed. Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 19-33 (p. 32).

[24] For instance, Rene Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, in *Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vol I, trans. by E. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1649] 1911); John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: [s.n.], 1690); Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (London: John Darby, 1711). In the sixteenth century Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* highlighted laughter/humour as the remedy for melancholy. William Beattie, a famous English physician of the eighteenth century used humour in treatment of his patients. Roland Antonioli, 'Rabelais et la medicine', *Etudes Rabelaisiennes*, 12 (Geneva: Droz, 1976), 356-57.

[25] Henri de Mondeville, *Chirurgie de maître Henri de Mondeville, composée de 1306 à 1320*, trans. by Edouard Nicaise (Paris: F. Alcan, 1893).

produced an excessive blood flow that helps to create healthy-looking complexions and vitality in facial features.[26] Laughter was, therefore, said to be aligned with recuperative forces that contribute to a patient's wellness. We can only surmise Thillaye's true motivations in creating a marionette theatre on the Isla de Leon. However, as a trained surgeon, from a respected medical family, it seems likely that Thillaye would no doubt have been aware of theories pertaining to the health effects of laughter in the early nineteenth century, and sought to apply these theories to his patients and fellow prisoners.[27]

Home, Nation, and Nostalgia

Recent studies of conflicts from the eighteenth century, the American Civil War in the 1860s, and even prisoners of war in the twentieth century, all point toward the detrimental effects of nostalgia, or homesickness, on soldiers and prisoners of war sent abroad for indefinite lengths of time.[28] Underwriting all of these approaches is the notion that theatre (as well as music) served as a vital link to home, and to the safety and security of a pre-captive past.

Auguste Thillaye was among the prisoners transported from Cabrera to England in July 1810. In 1813, he was exchanged for a British surgeon held in France. In 1814, Thillaye submitted a dissertation to the Faculté de Médecine in Paris. The dissertation was largely a memoir of his captivity in Spain. In his dissertation, Thillaye reports on the effects of nostalgia amongst the prisoners of Cadiz and Cabrera in the section of his dissertation entitled 'Occupations des prisonniers, et moyens employés pour arrêter les progrès de la nostalgie ' ['Occupations of the Prisoners, and Activities to Stop the Advance of

[26] Laurent Joubert, *Traité du ris* (Paris: Champion, 1579).
[27] Thillaye's father Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Thillaye (1752-1822) was a contributor to a collection of essays arguing for electricity in medicine entitled *Essai sur l'emploi médical de l'électricité et du galvanisme* (Paris: [s.n.], 1803).
[28] David Anderson, 'Dying of Nostalgia: Homesickness in the Union Army during the Civil War,' *Civil War History*, 56 (September 2010), 247-82; Linda M. Austin, *Nostalgia in Transition, 1780-1917* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Peter Fritzsche, 'Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity', *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 1587–618; Lisa O'Sullivan, 'Dying for Home: The Medicine and Politics of Nostalgia in Nineteenth-Century France' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2006); Philip Shaw, 'Longing for Home: Robert Hamilton, Nostalgia and the Emotional Life of the Eighteenth-Century Soldier', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 39 (2016), 25-40.

Nostalgia']. The effects of homesickness and nostalgia were dire. Some prisoners, Thillaye notes, 'périssaient sans aucune affection apparente, et sans demander ni recevoir de secours' ['perished for no apparent reason, without asking for or receiving help']. Among the many occupations that helped the prisoners counter effects of nostalgia, Thillaye notes that the prisoners busied themselves with creating theatre on Cabrera. The theatre, he writes, produced 'une illusion qui nous rapprochait de notre patrie' ['an illusion that brough us closer to our homeland']. Creating 'une illusion qui nous rapprochait de notre patrie' played to the prisoners' overwhelming nostalgic sentiments, manifest in representations of home. These illusions, Thillaye notes, produced 'le meilleur effet' [the best effect] on the prisoners' mental health.[29]

Working with a group of young prisoners from the Balkan Wars aged 16 to 25 (roughly the same age as many of the prisoners from the Battle of Bailen), Sonja Kuftnic found that theatre provided 'a way to "deal more effectively" with past events through metaphorical means'.[30] Kuftnic found that the theatre in the prison camp served as an 'in-between space of no-longer-home and not-yet-elsewhere', where prisoners could create familiar performances 'that worked to navigate nostalgia and contain trauma, striving to generate new narratives of belonging and modes of being'. In other words, theatre provided a safe space for prisoners to negotiate the trauma of the present and uncertain future by presenting memories of the past, perceived as both safe and secure. Both through the repertoire of plays performed and the physical spaces themselves, we will see that theatre, in Kuftinec's words, served 'to navigate nostalgia and contain trauma, striving to generate new narratives of belonging and modes of being'.[31] We will see that these 'narratives of belonging and modes of being' are deeply entwined in concepts of national identity and the complex cultural contexts of the early nineteenth-century Europe.

The medical term 'nostalgia' was first coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, a Swiss doctor at the University of Basel, in his *Dissertatio medica de nostalgia*.

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[29] Thillaye, p. 18-19.
[30] Sonja Arsham. Kuftinec *Theatre, Facilitation and Nation Formation in the Balkans and Middle East* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 40.
[31] Kuftinec, p. 40.

In his *Dissertatio*, Hofer presented the first detailed examination of nostalgia's psychological and physiological characteristics.[32] The malady, according to Hofer, was 'sympathetic of an afflicted imagination', and described a form of homesickness prevalent among Swiss mercenaries deployed in the lowlands of France and Italy in the seventeenth century. According to Hofer, the disease was the result of a 'continuous vibration of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which impressed traces of ideas of the Fatherland still cling'. By continually dwelling on images of home, these bodily spirits became more dominant and so the preoccupation with returning to one's native land intensified. According to Hofer, warning signs of nostalgia included scorn for foreign customs, a tendency to shun conversation, annoyance at being the butt of jokes, and disparagement of other regions yet simultaneous delight in one's own native territory. Those who actually succumbed to nostalgia's depression exhibited increased signs of melancholy, a depression that fostered unrelenting thoughts of home, disrupted sleep patterns, and induced frailty, hunger pains, unquenchable thirst, heart murmurs, repeated groaning, stupor, and fever. More serious warning signs of nostalgia's presence included lung and heart complications, swelling around the brain, and even the contemplation of suicide.[33]

Helmut Illbruck traces the etymological origins of the word, which combines the Homeric sense of *nóstos*, meaning 'homecoming', and álgos, meaning 'pain' or 'ache'.[34] In 1761 the Austrian physician Josef Leopold Auenbrugger, in his book *Inventum Novum*, drew on Hofer's account to describe a condition in which soldiers 'become sad, taciturn, listless, solitary, musing, full of sighs and moans. Finally, they cease to pay attention and become indifferent to everything, which the maintenance of life requires of them. This disease is

[32] An English translation of Hofer's thesis is provided by Carolyn Kiser Anspach, 'Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia by Johannes Hofer, 1688', *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine,* 2 (August 1934), 381-84. Referenced here as Hofer.
[33] Hofer, p. 376.
[34] For detailed discussion of the origins and development of nostalgia as a medical category see Helmut Illbruch, *Nostalgia: Origins and Ends of an Unenlightened Disease* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012), pp. 29-42, 101-26.

called nostalgia'.[35] Philip Shaw points out that in the wake of Auenbrugger's study, 'nostalgia was quickly taken up as a diagnostic category in medical discourse of the mid- to late eighteenth century, and was used in particular by practitioners of military medicine to account for the physical and mental infirmity of soldiers gripped by fantasies of return'.[36] The 'fantasy of return' is a particularly important notion in relation to the prisoners of war, which we will examine later.

Lisa O'Sullivan insists that while present in eighteenth-century pathologies 'nostalgia became an object of sustained medical interest only in post-Revolutionary France'. O'Sullivan suggests that this 'sustained medical interest' in nostalgia was a response to questions about national identities raised by the French Revolution. 'For medical practitioners, 'nostalgia became a case study demonstrating the apparent ability of French citizens to overcome their inherent characteristics and embrace citizenship of a modern state'.[37] Following the revolution of 1789, a new concept of nationhood was born in which 'the nation' and its people were one and the same. As Lynn Hunt has noted, the French Revolution sought national regeneration in which the creation of a new political and moral order was linked to a consensual community with its own ritualised language and behaviours.[38] In other words, the success of the 'nation' relied upon the implicit cooperation of its citizens. Relating this notion to nostalgia, O'Sullivan states that in post-Revolutionary France the concept of 'home' was 'no longer considered in terms of place, but as membership in the national community'. For soldiers abroad, 'home' was no longer their physical homeland, but was rather an ideology, a matrix of cultural codes that formed the 'nation'.[39]

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[35] Josef Leopold Auenbrugger, *On Percussion of the Chest: Being a Translation of Auenbrugger's Original Treatise Entitled 'Inventum novum ex percussione thoracis humani, ut signo abstrusos interni pectoris morbos detegendi'*, trans. by Sir John Forbes (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1936), p.16.
[36] Shaw, p. 32.
[37] O'Sullivan, p. 9.
[38] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 27.
[39] O'Sullivan, p. 10.

For soldiers fighting under Napoleon's Imperial banner in distant and often hostile corners of Europe, the concept of 'home' and the 'nation' was even more complex. We must keep in mind that these were mostly conscripts, not career soldiers, and necessarily there were mixed opinions about the war.[40] Nevertheless, as Alan Forrest points out, in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, the line between 'citizen' and 'soldier' was ostensibly blurred.[41] The defeat at Bailen was perhaps even more humiliating as it was the first major French defeat in the Penninsular Wars, and considerably tarnished the image of Napoleonic invincibility. As earlier medical texts noted, the mental and physical effects of nostalgia were exacerbated in defeat or retreat.[42]

Drawing on memoirs of the prisoners at Cabrera and Portchester Castle we see that nostalgic sentiment was a potent and present force within this group, and it was only amplified by the sense of despair from their defeat and surrender at Bailen. Ducor notes how news of various defeats in the war simultaneously produced bouts of physical illness where prisoners were forced to confront their own dark moods:

> 'Il est rare que la victoire et la santé ne marchent pas de front: aussi longtemps que la chance lui est favorable, une armée se porte bien. Fatigues, périls, privations, elle fait face à tout; elle surmonte, elle accepte tout avec gaîté. Mais il n'en est pas ainsi lorsque la fortune lui devient contraire: les échecs et les maladies se donnent la main, et après une défaite, les plus courageux pendant qu'on est en veine de triomphe, sont souvent les premiers à tomber dans l'abattement. L'énergie la plus héroïque sur le champ de bataille n'est pas toujours unie à la patience et à

[40] Of the memoirists used in this study, Ducor writes of patriotic calling into the armed services. Quantin equally writes of his enthusiasm to fight under Napoleon's banner. Gille, however, is a reluctant conscript, and recalls how he tried to evade conscription.
[41] See Alan Forrest, *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790–1820* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and also Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).
[42] George Rosen, 'Nostalgia: A 'Forgotten' Psychological Disorder', *Psychological Medicine*, 5 (1975), 340-54 (p. 347).

la résignation nécessaires pour supporter des souffrances, sans autre but que celui de leur résister'.[43]

[It is rare that victory and health do not go hand in hand: as long as the odds are favorable, an army does well. Fatigue, dangers, hardships, they face all; they overcome and accept everything with cheerfulness. But it is not so when fortune turns against them: failures and diseases go hand in hand, and after a defeat, those who are bravest in triumph are often the first to fall into dejection. The most heroic energy on the battlefield is not always united with the patience and resignation necessary to bear sufferings, without any purpose other than to resist them.]

Here Ducor draws a correlation of victory with health while conversely linking defeat with despair and illness. He acknowledges that the French defeat at Bailen had a detrimental effect on the prisoners' own emotional and psychological state. We must also keep in mind the historic context that Napoleon's army was an 'Army of Honour' and therefore defeat and surrender were both an individual and collective trauma.

For these prisoners, nostalgic sentiment, or this 'fantasy of return' was manifest in two distinct ways. First, we see themes of home and nation in the descriptions of the physical staging—scenery and stage curtains, and in the marionettes at Isla de Leon. Secondly, we see nostalgic sentiment in the choice of repertoire which includes a combination of classic comedies from the Comédie-Française as well as some of the most successful plays from the Paris stage, most notably boulevard melodramas and popular vaudevilles all evoking memories of a pre-captive past, and suggesting a potent longing to connect with the distant cultural milieu of home.

In creating the marionnette theatre at the Isla de Leon, Thillaye added a very French (specifically Parisian) touch to the theatricals, creating a tavern scene that would have been representative of daily French life including: 'Des filles, des pompiers, des faubouriens, des soldats de la garde de Paris…' ['Girls,

[43] Ducor, pp. 68-70.

firefighters, people from the faubourgs, soldiers from the Paris Guard…'].[44] Likewise, in a scene during the play featuring the universal flood, Noah's ark rises from the heights of Montmartre in Paris. This had the effect of personalising the theatricals, while at the same time presenting a vision of home. Thillaye was not the only one to use stage effects to create a sense of the home for the prisoners. At Portchester Castle, the theatre's backdrop illustrated a famous Parisian landscape to the theatre.[45] Gille tells us that the design included:

> [V]ue prise d'une des maisons du coin de la Place Dauphine sur le Pont-Neuf; un côté du trottoir de ce pont au milieu duquel on remarquait le café Paris ; [...] le pont des Arts, le pont Royal, celui de la Concorde et la barrière des Bonshommes se voyaient dans la perspective; à droite et à gauche figuraient la superbe colonnade du Louvre, le palais et la terrasse des Tuileries sur lequel flottait le pavillon national, l'Hôtel des Monnaies, les Quatre-Nations, les théatins et les principaux hôtels du quai Voltaire. '[46]

> [View from one of the houses at the corner of the Place Dauphine towards the Pont-Neuf; one side of the sidewalk of this bridge, in the middle of which you can see the Paris café; [...] the Pont des Arts, the Pont Royal, that of the Concorde and the Barrière des Bonshommes were shown in perspective; to the right and left could be seen the superb colonnade of the Louvre, the palace and terrace of the Tuileries over which flew the national flag, the Hôtel des Monnaies, the Quatre-Nations, the Theatin [convent] and the main hotels of the quai Voltaire.]

Here 'home' is quite literally represented by a series of iconic landmarks from Paris 'qui leur rappelait les plus doux souvenirs' ['that reminded them of

[44] Ducor, pp. 141-42. *Faubouriens* was a term for ordinary Parisians.
[45] Jean-François Dominique de Carré was a *machiniste* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, and conscripted into the Garde de Paris in 1807. Carré arrived at Portchester Castle in July 1810 and is credited with constructing the theatre in the basement of the castle keep. He is discussed in more detailed in Chapter 7.
[46] Gille, p. 269.

their fondest memories'].[47] Thus, the theatre itself merged notions of home and nation into one nostalgic message that faced prisoners each time they enjoyed a play.

Beyond the visual evocations of home and nation in the theatre space, the prisoners exercised a nostalgic 'fantasy of return' in their theatrical repertoire. ', Gille writes that the prisoners were able to 'on rédigea de mémoire quantités de mélodrames et de vaudevilles, des tragédies, des comédies, de grands opéras-comiques même' ['recall from memory a number of melodrama and vaudevilles, tragedies, comedies, and opera-comiques'].[48] From memory the prisoners were able to recreate the texts they had enjoyed on the stage back home in France. Figures taken from Kennedy and the Calendar of Performances at the Comédie-Française show that the prisoners were performing some of the most successful plays from Paris in the 1790s and early 1800s. Molière is the second most performed playwright in Paris from 1789 to 1799 with 1,864 total performances while Beaumarchais has 811 total performances and Regnard has 624 total performances. *La Médecin malgré lui,* which was perfomed at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, was also one of the most successful Molière plays with 239 total performances in the 1790s.[49]

Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775), performed at Portchester Castle on 25 October 1810 and 7 November 1810 and at Kelso in June 1811, had 313 performances in Paris between 1789 and 1799 with 134 total recorded performances at the Comédie-Française from 1800 and 1815. [50] Both Pixérécourt's *Cœlina* (1800) and *La Femme à deux maris* (1802) were among the most popular melodramas to be performed in Paris and the provinces of France in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Similarly, Gille notes that the prisoners staged Jean Cuvelier de Trie's *Le Petit Poucet, ou L'Orphelin de la*

[47] Gille, p. 270.
[48] Gille, p. 270.
[49] Source: Emmet Kennedy, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (Westport, Conn.; London: Greenwood, 1996), p. 106 and CESAR.
[50] For performances between 1789 and 1799 see Kennedy, p. 102. For performances from 1800 to 1815 see calender of performances at Comédie-Française.

forêt (1798), one of the most successful plays of the 1790s in Paris with 163 performances.[51]

Not only were the prisoners performing some of the most successful plays in Paris, there is further evidence that they took the opportunity to emulate trends on the French stage in their own Théâtre des Variétés at Portchester Castle. In November 1810 the prisoners staged a three-act melodrama, *Roséliska*, written by Jean-Baptiste Lafontaine and François Mouillefarine. The play opens with the main character, Stanislas, returning home from war only to find that his friend, Polowitz, has been secretly coveting his wife, Roséliska. Polowitz betrays his friendship with Stanislas when he abducts Roséliska to his castle. Not only does the play resonate strongly with themes of friendship, betrayal, loyalty and virtue, it also incorpates the form, structure and style of a boulevard melodrama.

Performing these plays that were successful in Paris before they left for Spain allowed the prisoners to reconnect with those happier times before the war, far from the banal existence that seemed to lie before them indefinitely. It allowed them to reconnect with home both through texts in the repertoire and through the physical stage environment. Victory Emeljanow's study of British prisoner-of-war theatricals in World War I and II points to a similar phenomena in which theatre served as a survival strategy not only for its power 'to preserve and reinforce' particular cultural values 'in an environment that threatened to neutralize them', thus serving 'to keep memory alive'. [52] The nostalgic connection with a distant home, exercises both a collective and individual memory of a pre-captive past, 'to transform the extreme experiences of capture and imprisonment by evoking the pre-war past with its patina of certainty'. For the prisoners of Bailen, familiar vaudevilles, comedies, *opéra-comiques*, and melodramas not only entertained and distracted from the 'extreme experiences of capture and imprisonment', they evoked happy memories of a pre-war past. [53]

[51] Gille, p. 270. Kennedy records that there were 156 performances of *Le Petit Poucet* at Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes and 7 at Théâtre du Marais. See Kennedy, p. 132.
[52] Emeljanow, p. 183.
[53] Emeljanow, p. 183.

PART II:

JOURNEY THROUGH CAPTIVITY
ISLA DE LEON, CABRERA, & PORTCHESTER CASTLE

Chapter 5

FROM BAYONETS TO MARIONETTES
Polichinelle on Isla de Leon

El Hospital de la Segunda Aguada

When he learned of General Dupont's surrender at the Battle of Bailen in July 1808, Napoleon is reported to have exclaimed: 'Je vois que tout le monde a perdu la tête depuis l'infâme capitulation de Baylen. […] Je vois bien, dit-il, qu'il faut que j'aille moi-même remonter la machine' ['I see that everyone has lost their heads since the infamous surrender of Bailen. [...] I see that I must go myself and get the machine working again.][1] In November 1808, Napoleon marched his *Grande Armée* into Spain with the aim of re-establishing his brother Joseph on the throne, and of getting the British out of the Iberian Peninsula. On 4th December 1808, Napoleon arrived in Madrid re-asserting French dominion over Spain.

The unfortunate French prisoners of Bailen were held in Cadiz throughout the winter of 1808-09.[2] Some of the prisoners who could not be accommodated on the hulks, found a slightly more comfortable life in the *nueva población* [new city] of San Carlos on the Isla de Leon,[3] (see fig. 1) which also served as a hospital and a housing quarter for the officers and their wives.[4] When he was taken ill in early 1809, Henri Ducor was transferred to the hospital on San Carlos which he describes as:

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[1] Christian Dumas, *Souvenirs du lieutenant général comte Mathieu Dumas de 1770 à 1836*, III (Paris: Librairie de Charles Gosselin, 1839), pp. 321-22.
[2] The port city had been under British blockade since the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. See Vincente Ruiz García, *Los pontones de Cadiz y la odisea de los soldados derrotados en la batalia de Bailen, 1808-1814* (Bailen, ES: Asociación Historiador 'Jesus de Haro Malpesa', 2013).
[3] A strip of land in Cadiz Harbour. Between 1729 and 1813, the island was called Villa de la Real Isla de Leon, but it was renamed San Fernando in honour of Fernando VII following 1813.
[4] For a history of the hospital see Francisco Javier and Ramírez Muñoz, *El Hospital de la Segunda Aguada, 1793-1854* (Cadiz: Diputacón de Cadiz, 2013).

> Une des plus belles casernes qu'il y ait en Europe: on pourrait y loger au moins dix mille hommes; il est situé dans la nouvelle ville, détaché au centre d'autres édifices à l'usage de la marine. Sa structure est un carré parfait, dont le milieu est occupé par une vaste cour, sur laquelle règnent des galeries en arcades qui se répètent à chaque étage.[5]
>
> [One of the finest barracks in Europe, capable of housing at least ten thousand men; It is located in the new city, a stand-alone building surrounded by other buildings for use by the navy. Its structure is a perfect square, the middle of which is occupied by a vast courtyard, with covered galleries around the edge on every floor.]

The *población militar de San Carlos* was designed and built in Isla de Leon in 1776, near an existing military arsenal, with a military school and hospital and administration buildings including the neo-classical home for the Captain in charge of overseeing the administration of Cadiz.[6] Within the military compound was a military hospital called La Segunda Aguada. Conditions in the hospital were crowded and unsanitary. The surgeon for the First Regiment of the Garde d'Honneur wrote of the situation:

> La déprivation d'eau et de dons aliments, ainsi que la malpropreté inévitable dans une réunion d'hommes aussi considérable, développèrent la fièvre d'hôpital; et la mortalité devint si grande, que toutes les vingt-quatre heures il mourait de quinze à vingt soldats à bord de chaque ponton, qui pouvait contenir de cinq cent cinquante à six cents hommes.[7]
>
> [The deprivation of water and food, as well as the inevitable filth in such a large gathering of men, led to hospital fever; And the mortality became

[5] Ducor, p. 134.
[6] Juan Torrejón Chaves, *La Nueva Población de San Carlos en la Isla de Leon, 1774-1806* (Cadiz: Centro de Publicaciones, 1992) ; also Francisco Javier and Ramírez Muñoz, *El Hospital de la Segunda Aguada, 1793-1854* (Cadiz: Diputacóón de Cadiz, 2013), p. 224.
[7] Thillaye, p. 1.

so great that every twenty-four hours fifteen to twenty soldiers died on board each prison hulk, which could hold between five hundred and fifty and six hundred men.]

On 4 February 1809, the Head of the Guards, the Marques de Villel, wrote that there were more than 700 French prisoners in hospital and more than twenty prisoners died daily.[8] He made arrangements that the prisoners would be sent to the hospital at the Isla de Leon, which had 1,400 beds available.[9]

Theatricals at San Carlos

Director and Players

One of these prisoners at the hospital was Sébastien Blaze, an *apothicaire* from Avignon who at age nineteen in January 1808 was conscripted into Napoleon's Grande Armée.[10] Initially held on the *ponton*, Vielle-Castille, Blaze was taken ill in March 1809 and sent to the Segunda Aguada where he describes a vibrant theatrical milieu. In addition to the officers and their wives, Blaze found 'une espèce de colonie formée par les matelots de l'escadre française, les débris des régiments de la garde de Paris' ['a colony of sailors from the French squadron, and some of the regiments of the Garde de Paris'].[11] While there was no record taken of the French prisoners at the hospital, memoirist Joseph Quantin tells us that a number of the *sociétaires* had previously 'joué sur les théâtres des prisonniers au quartier [San Carlos]' ['acted in the prisoners' theatre at San Carlos']. In his memoir Quantin gives the roles of each *sociétaire*: André

[8] Arcivo Historico Nacional (AHN): estado 46F/218, 1. Juan Torrejón Chaves, *La Nueva Población de San Carlos en la Isla de Leon, 1774-1806* (Cadiz: Ministerio de Defensa, Secretaría General Técnica, Centro de Publicaciones, 1992), p. 171.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Sébastien Blaze, *Mémoires d'un apothicaire sur la Guerre d'Espagne, pendant les années 1808 à 1814* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1828).
[11] Blaze, p. 183.

Gruentgentz played *les mères*, Jean-Antoine-Gabriel Palluel played the *bas comique* while Pierre César Reverdy played the *père noble*. [12]

Blaze notes that the prisoners at Isla de Leon were treated to concerts by Pierre Perret, 'un élève de Rode, violoniste excellent' ['a student of Rode, an excellent violinist'], who served as 'chef de musique de la 4e légion, et ses symphonistes' ['head of music of the 4th legion and its orchestra'].[13] Along with Perret was 'M. Petit, danseur de l'Opéra de Paris' [Mr Petit, a dancer with the Paris Opera']. Blaze also mentions 'beaucoup d'autres artistes [qui] rivalisaient de zèle et de talent' ['many other artists who rivalled them in zeal and talents'].[14] Music and dance were clearly used to amuse the prisoners of the Isla de Leon and the prisoners appear eager to put their various talents to good use. We are told that they formed a dance school and organised elaborate dance balls in the courtyard of the hospital. From Ducor's description the theatricals involved an orchestra performing 'un mélange de motifs facétieusement tristes' ['a mixture of facetiously sad motifs'] interspersed with ballets.[15] Both Ducor and Blaze suggest that 'le directeur' of the marionnettes plays was 'un sous aidemajor de régiment, devenu aujourd'hui l'un des médecins les plus distingués' ['a regimental assistant major, today a distinguished medical doctor'].[16] From Ducor's description, the director of the plays was Auguste Thillaye, the chief surgeon for the *gardes-d'honneur*. Blaze describes Thillaye at San Carlos as 'un caractère original […] poète et musicien, plein de gaité, même un peu bouffon'

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[12] See Quantin, II, p. 151.

[13] Mentioned in Blaze, p. 183: See Perret's entry in the Portchester Castle register at TNA: ADM 103/333; Jacques-Pierre Joseph Rode (1774 –1830) was a French violinist and composer born in Bordeaux and later trained at the conservatoire. Rode served as violin soloist to Napoleon and toured extensively in the Netherlands, Germany, England and Spain. See Joann Élart, 'La mobilité des musiciens et des répertoires: Punto, Garat et Rode aux concerts du Musée, ' in *Le Musée de Bordeaux et la musique, 1783-1793*, ed. Patrick Taïeb, Natalie Morel-Borotra, and Jean Gribenski (Rouen: PURH, 2005), pp. 157–73.

[14] Blaze, p. 183.

[15] Ducor, p. 141. All future descriptions of the 'drame des marionnettes' at Isla de Leon will be from Ducor, pp. 138-49. Also transcribed in Appendix A. Ducor also tells us that 'Il se forma aussi des écoles de danse, et bientôt après nous eûmes des bals, où la plus laide des vivandières était recherchée et fêtée comme la plus belle des princesses'. Ducor, p. 138.

[16] Ducor, p. 139.

['a unique character, a poet and musician, full of gaiety and a little buffonery'].[17] All evidence suggests that Thillaye was particularly concerned not only with the physical healthy of his patients, but also with their spiritual and spiritual well-being and believed that theatre was a necessary activity to help distract patients from their suffering. Ducor notes that Thillaye 'prétendait avec raison qu'en égayant ses compagnons d'infortune, il restait fidèle à sa mission, qui était de contribuer à leur santé: il faisait la médecine de l'esprit, qui souvent est si salutaire pour le corps' ['was right in asserting that, in entertaining his companions in misfortune, he remained faithful to his mission, which was to contribute to their health: he was a doctor to their minds, which is so often beneficial to the body'.][18] Later, when the prisoners were transported to Cabrera, Thillaye wrote of physical activity as being the best way to cope with the detrimental effects of nostalgia. He believed that physical exercise 'eut l'avantage d'éloigner les affections tristes' ['had the advantage of alleviating sadness'].[19] At the hospital on the Isla de Leon, it appears that part of Thillaye's treatment included popular, comic entertainment, and to this end he created a marionette theatre in the hospital.

Théâtre des marionnettes

Blaze mentions that theatricals were played 'sur un theatre passablement décoré' ['on a fairly well decorated stage].[20] He goes on to give a description of the theatre at the Isla de Leon. According to Blaze, the surgeon's chamber was made into the *salle de spectacle* where a stage was built using benches and wood from the beds with wings made by drapping blankets over ropes. According to Blaze, the surgeon's chamber was narrow and 'il ne restait qu'un petit espace entre le théâtre et le mur' ['there remained only a little space between the stage and the wall'].[21] An earlier image of the Hospital de la Segunda Aguada gives some

[17] Blaze, p. 73.
[18] Ducor, p. 139.
[19] Thillaye, p. 18.
[20] Blaze, p. 183.
[21] Blaze, p. 160.

indication of what the interior may have looked like (see fig. 2). However, at the time the theatricals were being performed, the hospital would have been much more crowded, and the stage was placed up against a wall.

Ducor writes that 'puis on monta des spectacles' ['then we put on shows'] and then goes on to describe the 'drame des *marionnettes*' ['puppet show'] at the Isla de Leon in detail. The term 'marionnette' is a complicated word in French because it can be used generally to mean a variety of different forms of puppetry, and Ducor does not specific which form was performed at the Isla de Leon. There are essentially two main forms of puppetry that were in use in France in the early nineteenth century—string marionettes which were operated from above with strings and wires, or hand operated puppets which were usually conducted from below. In addition, another form of puppetry was *ombres choinoises*, literally 'chinese shadows', also known as 'shadow plays', was an ancient form of entertainment made from using flat articulated figures (shadow puppets) to create cut-out figures which are held between a source of light and a translucent screen. The shapes of the puppets sometimes include translucent colour or other types of detailing would be cut out of wood or thick paper. Various effects can be achieved by moving both the puppets and the light source and the puppeteer make the figures appear to walk, dance, fight, nod and laugh.[22] From Ducor's description the prisoners appear to be performing a variety of *ombres chinoises* along with string marionettes.

The standard procedure was to place the proscenium arch of the puppet stage inside the main proscenium arch. Behind this came a false proscenium (a set of wings and a border continuing the architecture or painted drapery of the stage front). Behind the proscenium would be two sets of wings relating to the backcloth.[23] The operator of the marionettes would have stood either behind the stage, directly above it, or in the wings. The most common arrangement was to work from behind the backcloth, either on the stage floor or on a raised platform, known as the bridge, and lean over a bar or shelf at waist height as we can see in a nineteenth-century print depicting the backstage at the théâtre Séraphin, one of

[22] See John McCormick and Bernie Pratasik, *Popular Puppet Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 54.
[23] McCormick and Pratasik, p. 87.

the most famous marionette theatres in Paris in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century (see fig. 3).

The marionettes appeared between the last set of wings and the backcloth, and the depth of usable stage was dictated by the distance the puppeteer could stretch. In his survey of European puppet theatres John McCormick indicates that a high bridge was usually favoured in French marionette theatre.[24] From Ducor's description it is seems most likely that the theatre at the Isla de Leon would have resembled the théâtre Séraphin in Paris with marionettes operated from above.

With this in mind, the theatre was put against the wall with the marionettist standing behind. The prisoners were probably sitting on the floor, on benches or beds, or standing before the theatre. Thillaye used materials at his disposal in the hospital such as sheets for the curtains and drops, the theatre itself was made from planks of wood stripped from the beds. When the prisoners are later attacked by a local mob, Ducor provides a list of furniture that was used to barricade the doors: 'Les bancs, les tables, les boiseries, les portes des chambres qui n'étaient pas occupées, nous employâmes tout à nous barricader' ['The benches, the tables, wood paneling, the doors of the rooms which were not occupied, we used anything to barricade ourselves'.][25] In addition to wood materials for crafting the theatre and the marionette figures themselves and scenery such as Noah's ark, Thillaye would have had access to medical equipment such as bandages and string used to operate the marionettes.

Polichinelle and *Commedia dell'arte*

The *commedia dell'arte* emerged from the carnival of Venice and spread throughout Italy in the sixteenth century, and eventually spread across Europe in the seventeenth century as well.[26] Marionette and puppet performances already had a long tradition both in the fairs and courts of Paris, and throughout the

[24] McCormick points out that these were typically about 1.5 metres above the stage floor, but this would have been dictated by the available materials at the Isla de Leon. McCormick and Pratasik, p. 97.
[25] Ducor, p. 168.
[26] Peter Jordan, *The Venetian Origins of the Commedia dell'arte* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).

provinces of France. They came to prominence in Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at the fairs at Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent. Marionettes gained considerable respectability toward the end of the eighteenth century. They were imported into the court of Marie Antoinette at Versailles. Many theatres of nineteenth-century Paris trace their roots to fair theatres, including the Opéra-Comique and several theatres on the boulevard du Temple.[27]

As marionette and puppet theatres evolved across the European continent throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they developed a classic repertoire of short performances featuring stock characters absorbed from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition such as Harlequin, Polichinelle and Scaramouche.[28] Ducor tell us that the prisoners wrote pieces for the marionette theatre 'dans lesquelles Polichinelle était presque toujours l'acteur le plus comique et le plus goûté' ['in which Polichinelle was almost always the funniest actor and the most popular'].[29] Polichinelle was the master of ceremonies for many of the fair theatres of Paris and the French provinces and he would have been a recognizable face and character for many prisoners. Polichinelle ('Pulcinella' in Italian, 'Punch' in English) was a derivation of the many original *fantoccini*—puppets originating in Naples at some point in the seventeenth-century *commedia dell'arte* tradition.

Theatre historian Allardyce Nichol points out that Polichinelle's most common evocation is that of a servant 'but he is also at times a peasant, a baker, a slave-merchant, an innkeeper, a painter, even the head of a household and a lover'. In the fair theatres, Polichinelle became distinguished by his quality of speech, which 'consisted in a kind of stupid wit or witty stupidity essentially gross and vulgar, which often expressed itself by crude similes wherein the finer

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[27] See Isabelle Martin, *Le Théâtre de la foire: des tréteaux aux boulevards* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002); Maurice Albert, *Les Théâtres de la foire* (Paris, 1900), pp. 288-9; also John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik, *Popular Puppet Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[28] For a general history of the *commedia delle'arte* see Peter Jordan, *The Venetian Origins of the Commedia dell'arte* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2014). Antonio Fava, 'Official Recognition of Pulcinella: The One who Saved Commedia from Extinction by Securing its Continuity to the Present Pay', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte,* ed. Judith Chaffee and Olly Crick (London: Routledge, 2015).
[29] Ducor, p. 139.

emotions and things of the spirit were brought down to crass earth'. Visually, Polichinelle was distinguished by his pointed hat and overtly phallic codpiece. These vulgarities made Polichinelle unsuitable for more upscale theatres such as the Comédie-Française or Comédie-Italienne (later to become the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique) but made him a prime character for the fair theatres of Paris where he became an established master of ceremonies.

Polichinelle and his *comedia dell'arte* cast were fluid and could be adapted to a broad range of dramatic scenarios to suit the needs and tastes of varying cultural traditions across Europe. This adaptability suited the transient, trans-cultural nature of *comedia dell'arte*. Nichol tells us that Polichinelle 'was a characterless dummy who could be dressed up in any way a particular actor—or a particular public—desired'. This explains why 'a Frenchman can assert that Polichinelle is an expression of the Parisian populace'.[30] Polichinelle could be moulded to suit a variety of situations, becoming an instrument to voice political and cultural concerns, and could also be made to imitate and mock those in power. Polichinelle is a representation of the common Parisians like many of the conscripts of Dupont's corps who now found themselves in a foreign and hostile environment. Polichinelle's troubles equated to the prisoners' troubles, and in this way, his adaptability made his character a suitable avatar to represent the prisoners' own frustrations, doubts, anxieties and fear.

In France, in the early 1800s, there were already a number of small marionette theatres in Lyon and Amiens. One of the most famous marionette theatres was the Théâtre Seraphin situated at No. 121 of the Galerie de Pierre of the Palais-Royal in Paris from 1784 to 1858.[31] The Théâtre Seraphin specialised

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[30] Allardyce Nicoll, *The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 87. See also John McCormick, *The Italian Puppet Theater: A History* (2010).

[31] For a history of the Théâtre Séraphin and the text of a number of plays of the repertoire, see Séraphin, *Feu Séraphin: Histoire de ce spectacle depuis son origine jusqu'a sa disparition, 1776-1870* (Paris: Nabu, 2013). There is a useful chapter on Séraphin in Denis Bordat and Francis Boucrot, *Les théâtres d'ombres: histoire et techniques* (Paris: L'Arche, 1981). The théâtre Séraphin was incredibly popular and accessible. Admission charges for the théâtre Séraphin were relatively high at 24 *sous* for the best seats (with arms), 12 *sous* for the second price (ordinary chairs), and 6 *sous* for the cheap seats (stools). Performances were given at 6 in the evening and at 5 and 7 on Sundays and holidays.

in more upscale marionettes, *ombres chinoises* and the main piece in its repertoire was *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* [*The Temptation of Saint Anthony*]. At Isla de Leon, the prisoners adapted Séraphin's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* followed by a performance of *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition* [*Polichinelle before the Inquisition*] and finally a spectacular performance of *Le Maniaque Supposé, ou le déluge universel* [*The Universal Flood*] intriguingly referred to as a 'hydrolico-tragi-comédie-parade, avec tableaux, ouvertures et changements de décors à vue'.[32] Though they are short pieces, and often somewhat farcical—if not outright obscene—in nature, each of these short plays resembles the marionette traditions of Paris while utilizing standard *commedia dell'arte* characters to explore themes of judgement, escape and salvation that resonate with the prisoners' own experience of capture and captivity.

La Tentation de Saint Antoine

Though Ducor does not provide the text or description for *La Tentation*, we can read existing texts from an earlier performance given at Versailles in 1791, and which remained relatively unaltered in the repertoire of the théâtre Séraphin throughout most of the nineteenth century.[33] *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* at the Théâtre Seraphin is set in the desert of Egypt where the reclusive Saint-Antoine is visited by Lucifer's daughter, Prosperine, who tempts the saint with promises of worldly wealth and power. The saint refuses her offers and she returns three times in different disguises, but he resists the temptations and eventually receives his reward for his resilience and faith, and is hauled aloft by a couple of angels.[34]

In conveying a sense of the *mise-en-scene* for *La Tentation*, Ducor mentions that that play evoked 'les imaginations de Callot'.[35] Jacques Callot (c. 1592-1635) was a draftsman and engraver whose works often depicted soldiers,

[32] Ducor, p. 139.
[33] All quotes taken from 'La tentation de Saint Antoine: représentée pour la premiere fois à Versailles, le 7 novembre 1791' published in *Le Séraphin de l'enfance: recueil de pièces d'ombres chinoises, dédiées à la jeunesse,* ed. Dembour and Gangel (Paris, 1843).
[34] In later versions the character of Prosperine is replaced as Luciole, but the structure remains the same.
[35] All further descriptions of the theatricals are taken from Ducor, p. 138-49. Transcribed in Appendix A.

clowns, drunkards, beggars as well as court life and religious scenes.[36] In his indulgent and highly theatrical engraving of *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1634, see fig. 4), Callot depicts Saint Anthony facing the hosts of hell and the Whore of Babylon. It is also possible to obtain a visual reference for the figures from surviving *ombres chinoises* themselves from the Théâtre Séraphin (see fig. 5).

Ducor describes the Isla de Leon staging, 'ces souvenirs de la patrie, que, loin de leur pays, les Français aiment tant à se retracer, se trouvaient dans les feux pyriques, qui dessinaient la perspective des principaux monuments de la France' ['these memories of the homeland, which the French, far from home, are so fond of recollecting, were to be found in the *feux pyriques,* which showed a view of the principal monuments of France'].[37] It is unclear exactly which 'monuments de la France' were included in the stage scenery. However, as we will later see at Portchester Castle, the prisoners decorate the stage curtain with a scene of a view from the place de Dauphine from the île de la Cité in Paris.

Polichinelle devant l'inquisition

Ducor tells us that the most popular play performed at San Carlos was *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition*, which he says 'faisait fureur: il eut je ne sais plus combien de représentations consécutives' ['was a big success with who knows how many consecutive performances'].[38] According to Ducor, *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition* features the famous magician Rothomago, a popular children's character created for the théâtre Séraphin in the late-eighteenth century. In *l'Inquisition*, Polichinelle finds himself before the Holy Tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition headed by Pope Rothomago. With a flick of his magic wand he transforms 'de l'espèce humaine en chambellans, en pages, en hérauts d'armes, en ducs, en comtes, en marquis, en soldats' ['the human species into chamberlains into pages, heralds-at-arms, dukes, counts, marquis, and

[36] Jules Lieure, *Jacques Callot: Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre gravé* (Paris: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1988). Callot made a series of prints depicting various characters of the *commedia dell'arte*.
[37] Ducor, p. 139.
[38] Ducor, p. 141.

soldiers'].[39] Crude and violent in his usual style, Polichinelle abuses his companion, Harlequin, before kicking the procession of the *auto-da-fé,* beating the holy judges including Pope Rothomago, and leaving their dead bodies in a pile on the stage. The *auto-da-fé* was a major aspect of the Holy tribunals during the Spanish Inquisition, and the final step in the Inquisition process. It involved a Catholic Mass, prayer, a public procession of those found guilty, and a reading of their sentences.[40] Spanish artist François Goya depicts in his painting, *Auto Da Fé of the Inquisition* (1812; see fig. 6), which can offer an approximate visual sense of how the play might have been staged.

Having beaten the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition into a pile, 'aussitôt accourait le diable qui voulait tout emporter, et une troupe de Dominicains qui cherchaient à s'emparer de Polichinelle' ['immediately the Devil rushed up, who wanted to carry everything away, and a troop of Dominicans, who tried to capture Polichinelle'].[41] Suddenly 'tambours battaient la charge' [drums beat a charge] and batallions of French soliders rush from all sides with bayonettes pointed and 'le Diable et les Dominicains ne savaient plus où se cacher' ['the Devil and Dominicans do not know where to hide']. The French soldiers save Polichinelle while 'les Espagnols se livraient à la joie, les danses commençaient' ['the Spanish gave themselves over to joy and began dancing']. The scene comes to a close with a poignant and politically charged image. Ducor describes that 'le fond du théâtre on apercevait en transparent, au milieu d'une auréole de gloire, la figure de Napoléon assis dans un char que guidait le génie de la civilisation, son flambeau à la main' ['the backcloth became transparent and the figure of Napoleon could be seen, in the middle of a halo of glory, seated in a chariot led by the spirit of civilization with his torch in his hand'].[42] The piece ends with Napoleon bringing civilisation to the disorder and chaos, and the Spanish rejoicing at his arrival.

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[39] Ducor, p. 138.
[40] See Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).
[41] Ducor, p. 140.
[42] Ducor, p. 140-41.

Le Maniaque Supposé, ou le déluge universel

Following *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition*, Ducor describes *Le Maniaque Supposé, ou le déluge universel,* as a 'hydrolico-tragi-comédie-parade, avec tableaux, ouvertures et changements de décors à vue' ['aquatic tragicomic parade with tableaux, ouvertures and changes of decor in view'] .[43] As the description says, the performance consisted of spectacular effects using pressurized water while combining a tragi-comic plot performed in the style of the *parades* with tableaux and changes of scenery.[44]

The sequence begins with an orchestra which 'exécutait une cacophonie des plus bizarres; c'était un mélange de motifs facétieusement tristes, ou d'une jovialité des plus triviales' ['was executing a most bizarre cacophony; a mixture of facetiously sad motifs, or a most trivial mixture of music']. During this 'baroque ouverture', behind a curtain could be heard sounds of drunken singing and harsh, quarrelsome voices reminiscent of a tavern brawl. When the curtain rose, spectators were greeted by a tableau of 'le désordre d'une orgie de guinguette' [the disorder of a tavern orgy] complete with:

> Des filles, des sacré pans [sic], des pompiers, des faubouriens, des soldats de la garde de Paris, verts et rouges, des tables brisées, des tabourets renversés, des coups de poings, des bouteilles lancées, et de lubriques horreurs que n'interrompait point ce tapage. Sur la droite se voyaient des saltimbanques, des bateliers, et des banquistes de toute espèce, menant grand bruit sur leurs tréteaux […] Tout cela se passait non loin des hauteurs de Montmartre, entre deux moulins à vent; et tout près du télégraphe on découvrait un énorme bateau en construction.[45]
>
> [Girls, rogues, firemen, people from the faubourgs, soldiers of the Paris guard, green and red, broken tables, stools thrown over, punches, bottles thrown, and lecherous horrors that the noise did not interrupt. On the right were street entertainers, boatmen, and quacks of all kinds, making a

[43] Ducor, p.141.
[44] 'Parades' were a form of street entertainment in France in the eighteenth century.
[45] Ducor, pp. 141-42.

great noise on their trestles [...] All this took place not far from the heights of Montmartre, between two windmills; and very close to the telegraph one discovered an enormous boat under construction.]

To get a sense of what the tableau might have looked like, Ducor tells us that the figures resembled 'la galerie de figures en cire du célèbre Curtius'. While we do not have any surviving evidence of what the figures might have looked like, we do know that certain prisoners demonstrate skills in carving figures. Small figurines carves in bone have been found on Cabrera (see fig. 7 and 8) and may give us an idea of what the figures on the Isla de Leon looked like.

The scene is set for the great biblical flood, 'le désordre d'une orgie de guinguette' are the unsuspecting populace of Jerusalem about to be washed away by the deluge. Once again, these are not distant, biblical figures, but are contemporary Parisians. More specifically, Ducor notes that they are the garde de Paris, which constitutes the significant contingent of the prisoners at the Isla de Leon, and later of the theatrical society at Portchester Castle.

The 'énorme bateau en construction' is revealed to be Noah's Ark. After various comical incidents, a deluge was released within the small theatre washing away the common inhabitants of the tavern in a biblical flood.[46] Ducor's description does not make it entirely clear whether or not this deluge was actually reproduced with real water or simply fabricated through effect using sounds of water or waves made of paper or linen sheets. Aquatic drama was not a new phenomenon in 1809. As early as the 1780s, the Amphithéâtre d'Astley in Paris had been producing 'le cirque aquatique' with performances of *Don Quichotte, Malborough* and *Robert le Diable*. These *cirques aquatiques* were performed in a large amphitheatre space with a huge basin in its center to present the comic naval battles. The Paris circus had large space and the appropriate receptacle for the water performance. In the crowded space on the Isla de Leon,

[46] See Derek Forbes 'Water Drama' in David Bradby, Louis James, Bernard Sharratt, eds, *Performance and Politics in Popular Drama Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television, 1800–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 91-108.

and with limited supplies at their disposal, it is likely that an actual deluge with real water would have risked damaging their marionette theatre unless they had access to suitable equipment, such as a large metal base-pan or even a large metal trough making a basin for the flood waters might have been practical.

Water was a precious resource in Cadiz. Though the port city was surrounded by the sea, fresh drinking water was always in short supply. When Sir George Cockburn visited Cadiz on a Mediterranean campaign in 1810, he was surprised to see that the inhabitants of the port city all had water tanks installed above their houses. With this limited supply of fresh drinking water, it seems only likely that whatever water was used in deluge would have been taken from the sea.[47]

The dramatic action of *Le Déluge* resumes as Noah's daughter, Cassandre, saves her lover—the son of a blacksmith—who in turn saves Noah from drowning. After several dramatic moments, the deluge stops and a rainbow appears in the sky with a captain who had previously been present in the tavern scene where he was cheated and mocked, but now returned decorated as Mercury and holding in his hand a huge barometer, upon whose needle is written in large letters the word: 'Beau fixe' ['Set Fair']. Harlequin appears having been hidden in the boat. The captain orders that Noah give his daughter Cassandre in marriage to Harlequin. They are promptly joined by Polichinelle who is instructed to marry Noah's other daughter though she violently protests. The scene ends with a ballet and a minuet by Cassandre. The fabled Mother Gigogne appears and rises over the heights of Montmarte with the entire population from the previous tavern scene on board.[48] Just like Saint-Antoine and Polichinelle, the populace are saved. This theme of redemption or salvation threading throughout the theatricals at the Isla de Leon speak to the prisoners' own hopes and desires reflecting wider current events on the Iberian Penninsular.

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[47] Sir George Cockburn, *A Voyage to Cadiz and Gibraltar up the Mediterranean to Sicily and Malta* (London, 1815), p. 50.

[48] The fabled Mother Gigogne was a mother with lots of little *polichinelles* hidden under her dress.

Judgement and Resurrection at San Carlos

La Tentation de Saint-Antoine, *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition*, and *Le Déluge universel* present themes of resilience, judgement, and resurrection that are highly poignant in the context of the prisoner-of-war experience in captivity. Before we begin to analyse the plays themselves, it is worth taking a moment to assess the larger context of current events in which they were created. The majority of the prisoners had been plucked from home in 1807 and marched across the plains of La Mancha in the unforgiving summer heat, a scene not too disimilar to the desert of *La Tentation*. They faced a humiliating defeat, but expected a swift repatriation to France. However, the months pass facing constant hostility and harrassement from locals. Finally, news arrives that Napoleon has marched into Spain, and the prisoners are marched to the Cadiz, expecting to be sent back to France. Instead they are held on *pontons* in fetid salt marshes.

Parallels between the prisoners and their repertoire are reinforced by the *mise-en-scene*. Ducor suggests that the stage contained 'ces souvenirs de la patrie'.[49] Saint Antoine was not some distant figure suffering in a far away land. He has been placed not in the distant deserts of Egypt—as the script calls for—but rather at home in France. Likewise Polichinelle is placed in a Paris *guinguettes* with fellow Gardes de Paris, and the ark rises not from a distant land but from the 'des hauteurs de Montmartre'. The theatre relocates the trials of temptation and resistance of Saint Antoine and Polichinelle from the realm of hagiographical allegory or *commedia* tradition to a more personal level. The struggles and temptations of Saint Antoine and Polichinelle represent those of the prisoners stuck in the chaos and disorder of the Isla de Leon.

La Tentation is a tale of resilience and a steadfastness to one's beliefs despite terrible threats or alluring worldly temptations, and it speaks directly to the prisoners' own situation. The play opens in a flurry of disorder suggestive of the chaos and disorder of the prisoners' own captivity from the battlefield of Bailen to the transient, ever-shifting terms of their captivity. Like Saint-Antoine, the prisoners found their own world turned upside down. In the chaos and

[49] Ducor, pp. 138-39.

disorder of their captivity, the prisoners would be required to hold fast to their faith in the Emperor, and not succumb to the ennui and depression that threatened to engulf them. The saint is ultimately judged to be faithful and is rewarded. The message suggests that if the prisoners remain faithful to Napoleon, they too will be redeemed.

The theme of judgement and redemption is continued in *Polichinelle devant l'Inquisition*. For the captives of the Isla de Leon, Polichinelle might be a comic buffoon, but his plight before the Spanish Inquisition is poignant and personal. His violent usurpation of the Inquisition, though comical, speaks also to the helplessness of the prisoners' situation, and their inner desires to overthrow their own captors. Fava further suggests that the character of Polichinelle concerns 'anyone caught in a moment of weakness, of extreme difficulty, of urgent need, faced with something which requires an immediately leap to escape'.[50] This could not be more relevant to the unfortunate, suffering prisoners of the Isla de Leon, who longed to escape captivity and return home. Polichinelle's insidious baseness gives him an ultimately farcical appearance which also makes him a safe avatar to represent the frustrations, anxieties and hopelessness of the captives making and watching the performance. It also makes him a useful tool for the French to culturally antagonize their captors under the auspices of comedy and buffoonery.

Polichinelle's victory over the Spanish Inquisition is both also politically and culturally charged.[51] The Spanish Inquisition itself held a prized place in the French imagination in the early nineteenth century. One of Joseph Bonaparte's first actions as the newly installed King of Spain was to abolish the Spanish Inquisition. Henry Kamen explains that the stories and propaganda about the Spanish Inquisition 'took on a life of their own, giving rise to purely fictional accounts that aimed simply to entertain their public with descriptions of humans

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[50] Antonio Fava, 'Official Recognition of Pulcinella', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte,* ed. Judith Chaffee and Olly Crick (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 108-13 (p. 112).

[51] María Salgues points out that 'after the English, the Church […] served as a prime target for French playwrights'. María Salgues, 'Españoles y Franceses en el teatro de la guerra: visiones reciprocas', in *Théâtre et politique pendant la Guerre d'Independence espagnole: 1808-1814,* ed. Claude Dumas (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1988), pp. 267-83 (p. 275).

fiendishly tortured and virgins ruthlessly violated'. These accounts arose largely from the French occupation in Spain in 1808 when 'a fertile source of horrors claimed to have been discovered in the cellars of the now-abolished Inquisition'. In one account, published as an appendix to an edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, a writer described how the French troops of liberation broke into the secret cells of the tribunal in Madrid, where: 'They found the instruments of torture, of every kind which the ingenuity of men or devils could invent'.[52] This popular image was exacerbated with portrayals of the Spanish as barbarians and Catholic zealots, not least on the French stage. Indeed theatres in France were quick to respond to the situation in Spain. In *La Belle Espagnole, ou l'entrée triomphale des Français à Madrid* (1809), French playwright Jean-Guillaume-Antoine Cuvelier at the Cirque Olympique in Paris presents a new comedy loosely based on Molière's *Tartuffe* in a Spanish setting. Saint-Alme, a French military officer in Spain, learns that the village under his command is threatened with insurrection, fomented by Don Tartuffos, a member of the Inquisition. An old retired soldier, Don Alvares, opposes the fury of fanatical villagers. In the insurrection, Saint-Alme is captured and sentenced to death, but the beautiful Rosina, daughter of Don Alvares, saves him. They are joined by French troops who are about to march to Madrid. Saint-Alme and Rosina marry while the people cheer, children throw laurels over the tents and the insurgents' flags bow to the imperial eagle. In *La belle Española,* the message is clear—the civility and *noblesse* of the French, visually evoked by the *aigle des Français* (Napoleon), will prevail over the dogmatic institutions of Spanish Catholicism.

In the crude and often violent antics of Polichinelle we find a unique stock character who, according to Antonio Fava, is 'everyone's saviour, saved by no one'.[53] However, this is not the case at San Carlos where Polichinelle is saved by Napoleon on a chariot, guided by the spirit 'de la civilisation' and with 'son flambeau à la main'. The message is blatantly obvious. Napoleon will bring order to the chaos of Spain. Through Polichinelle, the prisoners are perhaps expressing a hope that Napoleon will save them.

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[52] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 378.
[53] Fava, p. 111.

For this group of prisoners awaiting transport back to France, the image of a ship might have carried a significant emotional charge. While many of their fellow prisoners were housed on crowded *pontons* in the Isla de Leon, the lines 'mais je dois vous avertir que notre bateau nous servira' [but I must inform you that our boat will serve us'] might have had a more profound meaning. Like the populace in the tavern, the prisoners too would be saved from the deluge. Of all the images presented in these theatricals, that of Napoleon as the 'génie de civilisation' ['spirit of civilisation'] is the most lasting. Here Napoleon is both father figure come to rescue the prisoners while at the same time asserting French dominion over the Catholic Spanish. Natalie Petiteau points out that conscripts had a unique devotion to Napoleon drawing upon 'a military tradition where the leader was perceived not only as the guarantor of victory, but also as a father figure, concerned to protect the lives and conditions of his men'. The prisoners of the Isla de Leon had certainly endured 'degrading living conditions' and the hope that Napoleon would ultimately 'protect the lives and conditions of his men' is illustrated in Saint-Antoine's resilience and salvation, in Polichinelle's rescue from the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition, and in the *guinguettes'* rescue from the flood in *Le Déluge universel*.[54]

The hope of being saved from imprisonment by Napoleon was not an entirely far-fetched idea. As we have seen, while the prisoners were performing marionettes at the Isla de Leon, Napoleon was already on the move. In November 1808, Napoleon had marched into Spain to reinstall his brother firmly on the throne, and assert French dominion over the Iberian Peninsula. For the prisoners' at the Isla de Leon, rumours of Napoleon's presence in Spain no doubt inspired some hope that he would be marching to Cadiz to liberate them. In this way, we see the prisoners using theatre, and comedy in particular, to comment on their situation. The hopes of rescue and salvatioin are laid bare. Moreover, we see that the theatre facilitates a safe space to comment upon and process larger cultural and historical events.

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[54] Natalie Petiteau 'Survivors of War: French Soldiers and Veterans of the Napoleonic Armies', in *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790–1820,* ed. Alan Forrest (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 43-58 (p. 48).

As discussed in Chapter 4, laughter and humour is often an act of defiance for prisoners of war. For Sebastien Blaze, theatre (and laughter in particular) was just that. According to Blaze the Spanish relished 'voir des prisonniers français enfermés dans un hôpital, cela est si plaisant et si doux!' ['to see French prisoners imprisoned in the hospital, what a sweet sight!'].[55] The *divertissements* served as a direct affront, an act of defiance showing that the prisoners had not succombed to the horrors of captivity. Yet Ducor is quick to point out that theatre was firmly in the domain of the French prisoners, 'dans notre prison nous étions chez nous' ['in our prison we were at home'].[56] The theatricals at the Isla de Leon were made exclusively for the French prisoners themselves. Ducor writes 'Aucun étranger n'était admis aux représentations, qui avaient toujours lieu en famille, et pour ainsi dire à huis-clos' ['No foreigner was admitted to performances, which always took place *en famille*, and, as it were *in camera*'].[57] The dynamic could not be more different from the theatricals presented at Portchester Castle where locals and guards were invited to the performances. The theatricals are highly reflective of larger cultural and political shifts at work in these tumultuous years in Spain when the French and Spanish quickly transitioned from amiable allies to fierce rivals.

'Muerte a los Franceses !' ['Death to the French!']

In December 1808 over 17,500 French prisoners marched into the Isla de Leon, near Cadiz, a city that was at the centre of raging debates between liberal and conservative ideologies about Spanish statehood, nationalism and religion.[58] Gonzalo Prida explains that during this period Cadiz became 'a key point in the anti-French resistance, exerting political, economic and military power for

[55] Blaze, p. 160.
[56] Ducor, p. 147.
[57] Ducor, pp. 147-48.
[58] Gonzalo Butrón Prida, 'Ciudadanos Católicos: Mitos e Imágenes de La Propaganda Antiliberal en el Cadiz Sitiado', in *La guerra de Napoleón en España: Reacciones, imágenes, consecuencias,* ed. Emilio La Parra López (Alicante: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante/Casa de Velázquez, 2010), pp. 227-248; see also Ronald Fraser, *Napoleon's Cursed War: Spanish Popular Resistance in the Peninsular War, 1808-1814* (London: Verso, 2007).

Spain's patriotism'.[59] The principal theatre in Cadiz, the Casa de Comedias, would play an important part in the development of Spain's constitutional future. In February 1810, the Cortes de Cadiz adjourned in the Casa de Comedias, originally built in 1804 to replace the old teatro de Comedias. Here the courts debated and drafted Spain's constitution.

By the time the French prisoners arrived, the area between Cadiz and Jerez was one of the most densely populated regions in the entire Iberian Peninsula, totalling over 177,000 inhabitants.[60] Its natural harbour on the southwest coast of Spain made Cadiz a prime naval base and a target for the British Royal Navy. The Isla de Leon, upon which Cadiz and the *población* of the Isla de Leon perched, was separated from mainland Spain by a vast area of low salt marshes where the *pontons* were moored.

While the Battle of Bailen had been an important victory for General Castaños, bolstering Spanish nationalism and firing anti-French sentiments across the provinces of Spain, it also produced approximately 17,500 French prisoners. The prisoners quickly proved to be both a logistical and political burden. From October 1808, petitions had reached the Junta Central calling for the removal of French captives from Cadiz, arguing that the prisoners were a danger to local health.[61] Cadiz's prosperity as an international trading centre depended on its freedom from contagion. The presence of crowded *pontons* did not help, nor did the reports of dead bodies being thrown overboard and washing up on shore. Though it was surrounded by the sea, the arid climate meant that fresh drinking water was in limited supply, and low standards of sanitation caused several outbreaks of deadly disease.[62]

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[59] Butrón Prida, p. 227; see also 'Colección de diferentes papeles importantes de Cadiz (1808-1813)' at Biblioteca de la Fundación Federico Joly Höhr in Cadiz, reprinted in Gonzalo Butrón Prida, 'Ciudadanos Católicos: Mitos e Imágenes de La Propaganda Antiliberal en el Cadiz Sitiado', in *La guerra de Napoleón en España: Reacciones, imágenes, consecuencias,* ed. Emilio La Parra López (Alicante: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante/Casa de Velázquez, 2010), pp. 246-248.

[60] Manuel Moreno Alonso, *La verdadera historia del asedio napoleónico de Cadiz, 1810-1812* (Madrid: Sílex, 2011), p. 274.

[61] Correspondence and petitions can be found at Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid (AHNM): ES.28079.AHN/1.1.19//ESTADO, 6, A.

[62] In the year 1800, a devastating outbreak of yellow fever killed an estimated 7,400 to 8,500, approximately 13 to 15 per cent of the entire population of the Isla de Leon. See

For the British and Spanish military, the overriding concern was the protection of Cadiz as a safe fortress within free Spanish territory in the Iberian Peninsula. With French armies on the move across Spain, thousands of their imprisoned compatriots and the captive French ships in Cadiz Harbour became a sitting target for a relief expedition. As early as December 1808, the new British minister to Spain, John Hookham Frere, reported to London that orders had been given to remove the ships and prisoners from the strategic port of Cadiz as 'a contribution to its security'.[63] The administration of independent Spain, however, was in chaos and decisions were not easily implemented. The fate of the prisoners hung in balance during the winter of 1808-09. Quite simply, nobody wanted the French prisoners.

They were not only an economic and logistical burden, the presence of French prisoners had a tendency to incite fierce anti-French sentiments wherever they went, which ultimately led to riots and public disorder. Indeed by March 1809, a new threat was posed to the prisoners of the hospital at San Carlos and those on the *pontons* of the Isla de Leon. When a contingent of Swiss deserters from the French army arrived in Cadiz in March, nervous citizens feared that French troops had actually arrived to seize the city. Angry crowds turned on the Junta Central's local representative, and when they were diverted from that target, they marched towards the *población militar de San Carlos*. Rumours swept the prison that the mob was intent on a massacre. From the pavilion terrace the preparations could be observed. As the throng gathered, officers warned the inmates to prepare their defences. Ducor describes the horrifying ordeal:

> Enfin, il était six heures du soir quand ils se présentèrent : nous entendions les vociférations; nous distinguions des voix de forcenés, qui criaient : Muerte a los Franceses ! et une foule d'autres voix confuses et plus sourdes, dont le sinistre accompagnement ressemblait au bourdonnement souterrain des flots de la mer. Muerte a los Franceses! répétait-on, et les rugissemens de cette canaille allaient en augmentant;

George C. Kohn, *Encyclopedia of Plague and Pestilence: From Ancient Times to the Present,* 3rd edn (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008) p. 56.

[63] Letter from Frere to George Canning, 28 December 1808, TNA: FO 72/61, no. 42.

c'étaient aussi des trépignemens de pieds à faire trembler la terre, et un cliquetis d'armes continuel: on eût dit que déjà l'on battait en brèche les murailles de notre prison. Tout à coup, après un intervalle presque silencieux, le bruit redouble, on pousse des hurlemens de rage. Nous ne savions que penser de ce surcroît d'irritation: c'était le dépit d'avoir rencontré un obstacle.[64]

[At last, it was six o'clock in the evening when [the mob] presented itself: we heard the shouts; we could distinguish voices of madmen, who cried out: 'Muerte a los Franceses!' And a crowd of other confused and more muffled voices, whose sinister accompaniment resembled the subterranean buzz of the waves of the sea. Muerte a los Franceses! (death to the French!) they repeated, and the roars of this rabble increased. There were also a stamping of feet enough to make the earth tremble, and a continual clash of arms. One would have said that the walls of our prison were being stoved in. Suddenly, after an almost silent interval, the noise increased, and howls of rage rose up. We did not know what to think of this increase of irritation: it was the disappointment of having encountered an obstacle.]

Doorways were barricaded with furniture; bottles, pots and paving stones were gathered as weapons. The military governor of Isla de Leon ordered the gathering crowd to stand down and when they refused to leave, he was eventually forced to turn cannons on the mob until they eventually dispersed.[65] The French prisoners had become a dangerous liability. Finally, at the end of March 1809 the prisoners in the Isla de Leon and those on the *pontons* were told they were about to embark on two sea-going convoys. The sailors would go to the Canary Islands while Dupont's soldiers would be sent to the Balearic Islands

[64] Ducor, pp. 169-70.
[65] Ducor tells us that eventually the governor of the Isla de Leon asked the mob to disperse and when they did not, he threatened to turn the artillery and canons on them. They eventually dispersed. See Ducor, p. 170.

of Majorca and Minorca.[66] On the morning of 3 April 1809, a transport fleet set off from Cadiz escorted by four Royal Navy ships (HMS Bombay, Grasshopper, Norge and Ambuscade) and the Spanish frigate Cornelia—twenty-one ships in all. The British convoy commander, Captain William Cuming of the Bombay, reported in his log: 'Convoy consists of sail of transports having on board between five and six thousand French prisoners'.[67] They finally arrived in the bay of Palma de Majorca three weeks later.

[66] Ducor, p. 170.
[67] Captain's log HMS Bombay, 3 April 1809, TNA: ADM 51/1929. Exact figures for the prisoners transported varies. Thillaye suggests 5,000 prisoners arrived in Cabrera, see Thillaye, p. 18.

Chapter 6

LA COMEDIE-FRANÇAISE IN A CISTERN
Laughter As Escape on Cabrera

The French in Majorca

At the Archives Nationales in Paris is the 'Liste des émigrés et prêtres réfractaires' from the French consulate in Palma de Majorca from the 1790s.[1] The records document hundreds of names of French *émigrés* fleeing France in 1792. Many of the clergy found safe havens in the convents of Majorca while some aristocratic *émigrés* found refuge with Palma's nobility.[2] However, with the outset of the Guerra del Francès (1808-1814) the reception of the French in Palma began to take a deleterious turn. The French in Majorca were suddenly treated with suspicion. This turn is reflected in a public ordinance issued by the Supreme Junta of Palma in May 1808 to assess the number of French living in Majorca: La Junta 'ordena que es manifestin a l'intendent President de la Junta de Hacienda totes les propietats dels francesos existents a Malloca sota pena de incòrrer en delicate de traïció' ['orders that all the properties of the French living in Majorca be reported to the intendent President of the Treasury under pain of incurring a charge of light treason'].[3] The official figure returned was 188.[4]

During the Guerra del Francès, life for the French in Palma became increasingly difficult. Forty French merchants were taken into custody in Palma in January 1809, and fifteen resident French priests were listed for observation by the Junta in February.[5] Anti-French sentiment appears to have spread quickly through almost every level of Majorcan life in 1809. As refugees from mainland

[1] Liste des émigrés et prêtres réfractaires qui ont residé aux îles de Minorque et Mayorque, tirée de la Correspondance des Consuls de la République pendant les années V et VI. Held at Archives Nationales, Paris (AN) F/3332, exp 2.
[2] For a more thorough examination of the French *émigrés* and refugees in Majorca see Antonio Moliner Prada, ed, *La Guerra del Francès a Mallorca, 1808-1814* (Palma: Ajuntament de Palma, 2009).
[3] Junta Suprema de Govern del Regne de Mallorca, ban impress: s/imp, 31 May 1808, Arcivo Municipale de Palma (AMP): LN 2026/3b.
[4] Junta Suprema de Govern del Regne de Mallorca, ban impress: s/imp, 31 May 1808, AMP: LN 2026/3b.
[5] The entire ordeal is discussed in Smith, pp. 107-08.

Spain began arriving, rumours and stories spread of French atrocities, inciting deep anti-French sentiments. At the outset of the war pamphlets began to emerge in Majorca with popular songs and hymns directed against the French.[6] At church, faithful Majorcans were subject to a strongly anti-French catechism, celebrating King Ferdinand as the rightful ruler of Spain, and decrying Napoleon and the French as heretics and despots.

The general movement against the French in Palma seems to have found a place in the theatre as well. In Palma, the main theatre, the Casa de las Comedias would remain closed until 1811, reopening in large part due to the efforts of refugees from mainland Spain and Portugal arriving on the island since 1809.[7] With the reopening of the Casa de las Comedias, the theatre was directed, as Esteve puts it, 'més al sentiment que a la raô, s'intentà encendre els ànims en fervor patriotic' ['more toward sentiment than reason, with the intent of inciting patriotic fervor'].[8] A random sampling of titles demonstrates that a general theme of extoling patriotic values and military valour while satirizing liberal beliefs and more importantly, demonizing French invaders.[9] From pamphlets to the pulpit to the theatre, the general public of Palma were indoctrinated at almost every level with rhetoric that bolstered Spanish values while denouncing the French, and it was into this milieu that the transport ships bearing approximately 5,000 French prisoners arrived into the bay of Palma in April 1809.

Arrival of French Prisoners

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[6] These include Juan-Bautista de Arriaza y Superviela (1770-1837) *Profecía del Pirineo* (1810) and *Poesías Patrióticas* (1810), Cristóbal de Beña y Velasco's (1777-1833), *Lyra de la Libertad* (1813), Juan-Nicasio Gallego y Hernández (1777-1853), *El dos de mayo,* and Manuel-José de Quintana y Lorenzo (1772-1857) *Al armament de las provincias españolas contra los franceses*.

[7] Josep-Joaquim Esteve, 'Activitat teatral a Palma durant la Guerra del Francés' in *La Guerra del Francés a Mallorca, 1808-1814,* ed. Antonio Moliner Prada (Palma: Ajuntament de Palma, 2009), pp. 248-51; also for general reference see Manuel Larraz, 'El teatre a la Ciutat de Mallorca durant la Guerra del Francés, 1811-1914', *Randa*, VI (1977), 48-80.

[8] Esteve, p. 251.

[9] Titles of plays produced at the Casa de las Comedias give a fairly good indication of patrioticism and anti-French tone of the repertoire: *El héroe de Somosierra, alias el Empecinado* (1812), *El día feliz de España y exterminio del tirano* (Gaspar Zavala y Zamora, 1813), *Entrada de Lord Wellington en Madrid* (1813). Esteve, pp. 251.

In Palma, the government of the Balearic Islands was in the hands of the Junta Superior, governing the Kingdom of Majorca in the name of Ferdinand VII and consisting of twenty-seven persons representing the traditional elite, the church, and the military.[10] By early 1809, the Junta Superior of Palma was subject to direction from the main Junta Central, resident in Seville after its retreat from Aranjuez when they received news of Napoleon's advance toward Madrid in November 1808. On 22 March 1809, an official ordinance from the central government confirmed that the prisoners were on their way to Palma, and formally proposed that the French prisoners could be landed on Cabrera.[11]

> '…el Govierno siguiesen las enfermedades estando en estas islas pueda la Junta disponer que se pongan en La Cabrera, con lo que no solo se consigue el fin de evitar que se pudean comunicar y propagar las enfermedades entre los vecinos de las islas sino también el de evitar la perniciosa influencia de sus opinions.'[12]
>
> [In order to contain the spread of infectious disease the Government advises the Junta to place the prisoners on Cabrera, with the aim not only of avoiding the spread of diseases and illness to the inhabitants of the Balearic islands, but also to avoid the pernicious influence of their opinions.]

The action would not only prevent the spread of infectious disease to the inhabitants of Majorca, but would also restrict the 'pernicious influence' of the prisoners' revolutionary opinions, and limit the troubles and anxieties of keeping them in safe custody. Ultimately, on 21 April 1809, the Junta made the decision to remove the prisoners to the island of Cabrera in an attempt to prevent

[10] Miguel Bennásar Alomar, *Cabrera: La Junta Guvernativa de Mallorca y los prisioneros del ejército napoleónico* (Palma: Ajuntament de Palma, 1988), pp. 15-20.
[11] Letter from Junta Suprema Central to Junta Superior of Palma, 22 March 1809, held in Archivo Historico Nacional (AHN): Legajo 46 D, Baleares, 96.
[12] Letter from Junta Suprema Central to Junta de Palma, 22 March 1809, AHN: Estado, leg. 46 D, N 96.

contagion with the inhabitants of Minorca and Majorca.[13] The order stipulated that French senior officers from the rank of captain upward would be confined in Palma while the rest would be sent to Cabrera. At the same time, regulations were published prohibiting all unauthorized contacts with the port, coasts and bays of the designated prison island under pain of death, and requiring all ships sailing in its waters to keep a distance of one league from shore. Once on the island, the prisoners would be registered and allowed to keep only a few possessions for their personal use such as blankets, tobacco, and watches.[14]

L'Île de Cabréra

The island of Cabrera is situated approximately ten kilometres southwest of Majorca, and almost 288 kilometres from Valencia on mainland Spain. The island measures about two miles across from north to south and three miles from east to west, with its highest point, on the peninsula just west of the harbour, 550 feet above sea level.[15] One prisoner describes the topographical layout of the island: 'Cabrera is nothing but a calcareous rock, about a league long, the very irregular coasts of which form two little bays, one situated on the north, the other to the south'.[16] Regimental surgeon Auguste Thillaye describes the island and provides a brief history:

> Cette île, qui doit son nom à la quantité de chèvres que les Majorquins y nourrissaient, est inhabitée et inculte. Une espèce de château tombant en ruine, et propre à loger une trentaine de soldats, est la seule habitation qu'on y remarque; plusieurs grottes, creusées naturellement dans les rochers, offrent des retraites souvent visitées par les Arabes.[17]

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[13] 'Actas de la Junta Extraordinaria de la Niche del 21 de Abril de 1809', AHN: Estado, leg. 46 D: Estracto Mallorca, no. 101 (2).
[14] Ibid.
[15] See Pep Amengual and Miquel Frontera, eds, *Oblidats a Cabrera: el captiveri Napoleonic, 1809-1814* (Palma: Promomallorca Edicions S. L., 2009-2010).
[16] Robert Guillemard, *Adventures of a French Sergeant, During his Campaigns in Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia, etc from 1805 to 1823* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), p. 97.
[17] Thillaye, p. 10.

> [This island, which owes its name to the quantity of goats that the Majorcans fed there, is uninhabited and uncultivated. The only habitation to be seen there is a sort of castle falling into ruin, and suitable for lodging some thirty soldiers; there are also several caves, hollowed naturally out of the rocks, offer retreats and are often used by Arabs visiting the island.]

Thillaye's history of the island is partly accurate. A recent archaeological study of Cabrera has revealed that the earliest inhabitants of the island date back to 2,000 B.C.E.[18] The island became an important strategic location in early Greek and Roman trading routes and in the entrance to Cabrera harbour there are three sunk Roman vessels from the first to third centuries A.D. which are also mentioned by Pliny (23-79 A.D.). By 603 A.D. there is evidence that the island was inhabited by a monastic group of monks, as stated in a letter by Pope Gregory (c. 540-604).[19] From the seventh century until 1229 there is little information as most of Spain and Majorca was ruled by Islamic leaders from Africa. In the fourteenth century, the Majorcans built a castle on the island to protect it against Barbary Corsairs. All evidence suggests that the island remained uninhabited until the arrival of the French prisoners of war in 1809.

On 2 May 1809, HMS Bombay, one of the convoys transporting nearly 5,000 prisoners, sailed into the bay of Cabrera, almost an entire month after it departed from Cadiz Harbour.[20] By the time Henri Ducor arrived, other prisoners had already begun arriving on the island, searching for materials to make housing and fires to shelter against the cold night air. Ducor recalled the sense of dread and despair felt by the prisoners on his transport ship.

> Le soir, mille feux brillèrent de tous les points du camp: spectacle étrange et mouvant, qui dut amuser nos gardiens en vedette sur le pont des

[18] For general history of Cabrera see Amengual and Frontera.
[19] Amengual and Frontera, pp. i-ii.
[20] Thillaye, p. 18.

> bâtimens […] Pour nous; c'étaient des torches funéraires que nous allumions sur nos tombeaux![21]
>
> [That night we saw a thousand burning fires all around the camps: a strange and moving sight, that must have been most amusing to our guards on lookout on the boats […] But for us, they were funeral torches that we lit on our graves!]

The memoirists report a sense of despair quickly sweeping through the camp. Most of the prisoners had expected to be repatriated to France as the terms of Dupont's surrender stipulated. Those first steps on the beach of Cabrera no doubt felt like a betrayal. For other prisoners, however, landing on Cabrera might have seemed like a temporary relief from the dismal conditions of the *pontons*. Many of the prisoners had not stood on dry land since they were taken onto the original prison hulks in Cadiz in December 1808. In the bay of Cabrera the prisoners were unloaded onto the beach without any knowledge of the island. Many of the prisoners were in a state of near delirium, ill and weak and light-headed from lack of food. Cooking pots and utensils had been left on the beach before the transport ships departed and the materials were divided amongst the regiments. On the second day a barque arrived from Palma carrying basic supplies: hard biscuit, rice, lard and bread, but the Spanish crew treated the prisoners as if they had the plague. On its second trip, the barque delivered tents intended for the junior officers. Soon, a longboat also arrived offering a mixture of merchandise for sale to those with cash or valuables to trade. However, the merchants, fearing contagion, insisted that coins be dropped into a jar of vinegar, before the soldier's purchases were then dumped on the beach.[22]

According to one memoirist, the French prisoners were abandoned to 'un vaste rocher recouvert d'un peu de terre de la plus absolue stérilité. On n'y trouve aucun arbre à fruit, aucune espèce de légumes, ni rien de ce qui peut entrer dans les besoins de la vie humaine' ['a vast rock covered by a thin and

[21] Ducor, pp. 187-88.
[22] Gille, p. 198; Ducor, pp. 194-95; Charles Frossard, 'Prisonniers des Espagnols: memoires du captain Charles Frossard', *Historama*, 305, 306 (Paris n.d.), p. 67.

completely sterile layer of soil. There are no fruit trees, no vegetable species, nothing that will supply the necessities of human life'].[23] There were little or no natural sources of food or shelter on the island. When the prisoners first arrived there was a small population of wild rabbits, but those were quickly decimated, leaving only small black lizards and fish in the bay. Louis Wagré states that:

> On nous distribua des vivres pour trois jours ; ils consistaient en biscuit, riz, vermicelle, lard et pain. Ces rations, quoique très faibles, auraient pu suffire à tous si l'on en avait fait régulièrement les distributions; mais il y en avait toujours qui, par leur peu de ménagement, se trouvaient réduits, quand on nous faisait éprouver du retard, à mendier auprès de leurs camarades, plus ménagers qu'eux, de quoi les empêcher de mourir de faim.[24]
>
> [We were given food supplies for three days. They consisted of biscuit, rice, vermicelli, bacon and bread. These rations, though very feeble, might have been sufficient for all prisoners if the distributions had been regularly made. But there were always some who, by their lack of caution, were reduced, when there were delays, to beg their comrades who had been more cautious than themselves for more food to prevent them from dying of hunger.]

In addition to the critical lack of food, there were also no human dwellings on the uninhabited island, except for the ruins of an ancient castle upon the cliff top.[25] For housing, most of the prisoners slept in the open. Louis-François Gille recalls that 'j'entrelaçai d'autres branches dans les premières en les serrant le plus que je pouvais […] Cette habitation me servit pendant sept mois' ['I wove other branches together with the first, and pulled them together as

[23] Bernard Masson, *L'évasion et enlèvement de prisonniers français de l'île de Cabréra* (Marseilles: Nicolas, 1839), p.14.
[24] Wagré, pp. 68, 83.
[25] The castle was used to house officers and their wives.

tight as I could […] This housing served me for nearly seven months'.][26] Guillemard reports that 'There was a pretty handsome pinewood at the east end of the island, but it was daily disappearing, on account of the demand for wood to build huts with'.[27] The prisoners utilized vital natural resources for survival.

Governing the island of Cabrera was left to the prisoners themselves. With over 5,000 men deposited on the island, one of the very first priorities for the prisoners of Cabrera was to establish an administrative council made up of junior officers representing the major units. A wounded career officer, Lieutenant de Maussac of the Fourth Reserve Legion, was chosen as chairman of the council.[28] The prisoners' council delivered its own stream of petitions to the junta's commissionier, Don Jeronimo Batle, for repatriation, clothing, medicine, tents, utensils, axes and saws; and he in turn passed the requests upwards to the junta with his support.[29] Once approved, they were conveyed to the provisioner, who did what he could to fulfil them within his inadequate financial means. On 19 May 1809, Batle received a petition requesting the dispatch of a priest to help console the dying.[30] A month later, the bishop of Majorca and the military vicar-general appointed a parish priest from the island town of Porrearas as chaplain to the prisoners.

Don Damián Estelrich arrived on Cabrera on 18 July 1809 with an assistant and was installed by the prisoners in an apartment in the castle. On the surface, Father Damian was appointed to provide spiritual guidance and serve as a go-between for the prisoners' council and the junta of Palma. In reality it is likely that he was assigned to Cabrera to spy on the prisoners, and report any trouble back to the Supreme Junta in Palma. Guillemard wrote that Estelrich 'was not a priest, but a true Spanish monk, chokeful [sic] of fanaticism, gluttony, and the most shameful ignorance'.[31] The chairman of the prisoners' council, Lieutenant de Maussac, complained to the authorities in Palma in October 1809

[26] Gille, pp. 198-99.
[27] Guillemard, p. 97.
[28] Geisendorf-des-Gouttes, pp. 222-23, 227.
[29] Correspondence and petitions are held in APM: Fons Desbrull XXXVI, Legajo 1, 1; 2, 1; 2, 2; 3, 1; 3, 2; and Comissio de Cabrera; XVIII, Cafeta 52.
[30] See Miguel de los Santos Oliver, *Mallorca durante la primera revolución, 1808-1814* (Palma: Luis Ripoll, 1982 [1901]), pp. 284-86.
[31] Guillemard, p. 105.

that Estelrich was lower than a peasant, intruding on the island.[32] Despite his temper and unruly tongue, Estelrich managed to gain the trust of the prisoners' council and often supported their petitions, intervening on their behalf. From the moment of his arrival he reported to the Junta on the shortage of fresh water and the grave state of the prisoners' health.[33]

In September, Don Antonio Desbrull y Boil de Arenós was appointed the junta's chief commissioner responsible for liaison with the prisoners of Cabrera. Desbrull was one of Majorca's landed nobility, the Marquis of Villafranca, commander of the police force of Palma. Desbrull's first actions as commissioner were to provide adequate housing for the Cabrera captives as well as a hospital.[34] A makeshift hospital was set up on the lower slopes of the central valley a few hundred yards beyond the harbour.[35]

As the summer passed and autumn approached, a group of prisoners had set about constructing permanent housing for the canteen-women, or *vivandières*, which became known as the 'Palais-Royal' in a ragged little square at the base of the central valley.[36] According to Guillemard, the Palais-Royal was 'surrounded by ten or twelve huts, and containing as many stalls, some in the open air, others with a slight covering, with one end fixed to the ground, and the other supported by two poles. Here were sold bread, some salt fish, scraps of cloth, thread, needles, wooden forks and spoons; the various produce of the industry of the prisoners; pepper, twine, and other articles in the smallest quantity'.[37] The Palais-Royal became the central market and gathering place for the Cabrera community. Every morning those who had objects to sell found their customers there.

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[32] Letter from De Maussac to Don Antonio Desbrull, 27 October 1809, in APM: Fons Desbrull. XXXVI.
[33] APM: Fons Desbrull XXXVI, Legajo 1, 1; 2, 1; 2, 2; 3, 1; 3, 2; and Comissio de Cabrera; XVIII, Cafeta 52.
[34] Smith, pp. 78-79.
[35] Gille, p. 242.
[36] Memoirist Charles Frossard provides a lengthy description of the canteen-women, officer's wives and *vivandières*. See Charles Frossard, 'Prisonniers des Espagnols: mémoires du capitaine Charles Frossard', *Historama*, 305/306 (May 1977), p. 62-64. See also Thomas Cardoza, *Intrepid Women: Cantinières and Vivandières of the French Army* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010) and Charles Esdaile, *Women in the Peninsular War* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).
[37] Guillemard, pp. 95-96; Frossard, pp. 65-66.

La Comédie-Française on Cabrera

Theatre on the Beach

'Les Français sont les seuls,' writes Gille, 'qui puissent ainsi se créer des plaisirs dans un aussi affreux séjour, tout autre peuple qu'eux y périrait d'ennui au sein même de l'abondance' ['The French are the only ones […] who could create pleasures in such a frightful location, every other people would perish with boredom in the very bosom of abundance'].[38] The catalogue of misery was unending: malnutrition, lack of drinking water, disease, inhospitable weather, lack of shelter, and clothing. Facing almost certain death, the French prisoners of war mustered their critical lack of resources to produce some of the classic repertoire of the Comédie-Française, recreating the pleasures of Paris on this remote 'calcareous rock' in the Mediterranean. A painting of the island by one of the prisoners gives a sense of how crowded it might have felt (see fig. 9).

Throughout May and June 1809, the prisoners were still unsure of how long they would be left on the island. Gille writes, 'ne pouvant croire que le gouvernement espagnol eut l'intention de nous laisser longtemps dans une telle situation' ['we didn't want to believe that the Spanish government would leave us for long in such circumstances'].[39] No doubt many prisoners, like Gille, assumed their internment was only temporary and therefore did not invest the time and limited resources into permanent housing, let alone creating a theatre. Many were just busy trying to survive in the desolate conditions. However, it becomes clear that as time passed, the prisoners began to accept that they would not be removed from the island as promptly as they might have hoped and began building more permanent dwellings.

Gille suggests that by September 1809, a theatre was built near the beach of Cabrera. 'Les officiers et sous-officiers composant le conseil, quelques officiers de santé et plusieurs autres sous-officiers de lanciers, formèrent le projet de jouer la comédie. Il fallait élever un théâtre; il fut decide qu'on le placerait à

[38] Gille, p. 247.
[39] Gille, p. 198.

quelques pas en arrière de la chapelle'. ['The officers and non-commissioned officers of the council, some regimental doctors, and several other non-commissioned officers of lancers, formed the idea of performing plays. They had to build a stage; it was decided to locate it a few paces behind the chapel'.] Maps indicate that the Chapel was located on the wide flat area of land near the Palais-Royal and the beach. Finding a suitable space for a theatre on the island proved somewhat problematic. Most of the island of Cabrera is mountainous, with only a few flat regions. These were already taken up with a hospital, *baraques* [barracks] and the Palais-Royal. The only practical area for the theatre was the land around the beach in the cresent-shaped bay of Cabrera, just yards from the Palais-Royal. Under the supervision of non-commissioned officers from the gendarmes, volunteer labourers erected a backstage wall from interwoven branches garlanded with heather. Gille also describes the theatre:

> Sur un carré d'environ vingt-cinq pieds, on fit rapporter des pierres et des terres, on donna à cette terrasse trois pieds et demi à quatre pieds d'élévation. […] Les châssis des coulisses, le fond du théâtre furent faits avec des branches entrelacées en forme de claie et garnis de feuillage et de fleurs de bruyère. Les ciels furent remplacés par des guirlandes de même espèce.
>
> [On a squre of about twenty-five feet, stones and earth were laid. This terrace was raised 3 ½ to 4 feet [...]. The wing flats and the rear of the stage back curtain were made with branches interlaced to form a hurdle and decorated with with foliage and heather. The sky bands were replaced by garlands of the same kind.][40]

Gille suggests that theatre near the beach was inaugurated in September 1809, which means that it would have built constructed and used during the summer months. The theatre was basic, but it served a purpose. The dedication and ingenuity of weaving together garlands of foliage demonstrates a

[40] Gille, pp. 210-11.

considerable degree of determination and resourcefulness. With over 5,000 prisoners on the island, these natural resources were limited. The fact that the prisoners used valuable materials to build a theatre only serves as further testament to the importance of theatre in the prisoners' lives, suggesting that theatre was as essential to their survival as shelter from the hostile elements. Despite its resourcefulness and ingenuity, the theatre on Cabrera had natural limits, which ultimately determined the repertoire the prisoners could perform. Performing in an open-air theatre presented problems. The winter of 1809-1810 proved brutal for the prisoners of Cabrera. 'L'approche de l'hiver vint aussi interrompre le cours des représentations sur notre théâtre champêtre. Le vent éteignait les lumières et quelquefois la pluie dispersait acteurs et spectateurs' ['The approach of winter also interrupted the run of performances on our rustic stage. The wind extinguished the lights and sometimes the rain dispersed actors and spectators'].[41] The prisoners had established a working hospital in the valley just inland from the Palais-Royal. One evening in November, torrential rains flooded the valley and washed away the tents. According to Gille, approximately 300 prisoners died in the event.[42] The theatre on the beach located close to the hospital was also washed away.[43] The prisoners sought to relocate their theatricals elsewhere on the island, but this proved problematic. On the crowded island, space was limited. All habitable spaces were used for the prisoners to shelter against the inclimate winter weather. Theatre proved to be a vital part of survival on Cabrera and the prisoners were determined to find a suitable location to carry on performing.

Cistern Theatre

[41] Gille, p. 217.
[42] Ducor, p. 225.
[43] Starting in July 1809 monthly counts of prisoners on Cabrera were taken. The count for October 1809 states that there were 4,143 prisoners on the island. By February 1810 that number had dwindled to 3,607. See Revue du 1er Octobre 1809 in APM: Fons Desbrull 36/3, 25 and Revue du 1er Fevrier 1810 in APM: Fons Desbrull 36/3, 32. This drastic fall in numbers can be deceptive. We know that 250 officers were transferred from Cabrera to Palma in October. That still leaves a shortfall of 286 who are presumed to have died in the winter flood.

Memoirists tell us that the prisoners quickly built a new theatre to replace the one destroyed in the early November flood. When the theatre was destroyed, Gille suggests that the theatricals were then relocated to a cistern near the castle at the mouth of the bay. There is some discrepancy about the theatre itself between the memoirists and subsequent historians. The memoirists of Cabrera are all fairly consistent with their descriptions of the theatre on the island. Ducor writes that 'Nous plaçâmes notre théâtre dans une citerne' ['We placed our theatre in a cistern'].[44] Quantin recalls, 'Nous avions un théâtre établi dans une vaste citerne - dont on avait habilement tiré tout le parti possible' ['We built a theatre in a vast cistern, of which we made the best use possible'],[45] while Gille also mentions:

> Il y avait sur le flanc du rocher qui montait au château une citerne; nous descendîmes dans l'intérieur et la trouvâmes assez spacieuse pour servir de salle de spectacle. On fit aussitôt faire une ouverture à l'une de ses faces et élever dans le fond un théâtre en terres rapportées et maintenues par un petit mur de deux pieds et demi de haut, qui tenait toute la largeur de la citerne.[46]
>
> [There was a cistern on the flank of the hillside that rose up to the castle. We descended into the interior, and found it sufficiently spacious to serve as a theater. An opening was immediately made in one of its sides, and a stage of earth that we brought in was built to the rear, and retained by a small wall two feet and a half high, which spanned the width of the cistern.]

All of the memoirists seem to indicate that the theatre was created in a disused cistern near the castle. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians of Cabrera, however, offer differing perspectives on what the theatre might have been. There has been no archaeological survey to determine the exact location of the theatre on Cabrera. Swiss historian Geisendor-des-Gouttes suggests that the

[44] Ducor, p. 245.
[45] Quantin, II, p. 81.
[46] Gille, pp. 217-18.

memoirists got it wrong, and that they meant 'caverne' or 'cave' instead of 'citerne'. Swiss historian Geisendorf-des-Gouttes writes:

> 'Visitant avec soin les lieux, nous avons retrouvé, sans difficulté, 'sur le flanc du rocher qui montait au chateau', comme le décrit Gille. Non point une citerne, mais une caverne assez vaste, ayant exactement la forme d'une salle dispose en gradins et qui, très probalement, pouvait se remplir d'eau dans sa partie inférieure lorsque se produisaient les pluies violentes que l'automne amène avec lui'.[47]
>
> [With careful inspection of the place, we found, without difficulty 'on the side of the hill, that rose up to the castle', as Gille describes it. Not a cistern, but a fairly large cavern, having precisely the shape of a tiered room, which could very probably fill with water in its lower part when the violent rains which fall brought with it occurred.]

Geisendorf seems to be determined that the memoirists were wrong and that they meant 'caverne' ['cave'] instead of 'cisterne' ['cistern']. Smith does not contest Geisendorf, and while he refers to a cistern-theatre, he provides a photograph of the cave labeled 'cistern-theatre'. Present day literature about the island definitively points to the cave as the location of the prisoners' theatre, and when I visited the island in 2015, the park ranger verbally indicated that the cave was the location of the theatre. Multiple memoirists refer to a cistern theatre, and it seems unlikely that they would have mistaken a *citerne* for *caverne*. The *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française, 5th Edition* (1798) defines 'citerne' as 'Réservoir sous terre pour recevoir et garder l'eau de pluie' ['Underground tank to receive and keep rainwater'].[48] There is a distinct difference between a 'citerne' and a 'caverne'.

Wagré notes that there was a citerne on the island. 'Il y avait bien dans l'île, en avant de la rade, sur la colline en face de la mer, une citerne qui

[47] Geisendorf-des-Gouttes, p. 257.
[48] *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, 5th edn (1798), p. 247.

fournissait de l'eau assez abondamment' ['There was on the island, in front of the harbor, on the hill opposite the sea, a cistern that supplied water in abundance'].[49] [A late eighteenth-century map indicates a cistern in exactly the same place.] An early twentieth-century survey of the island indicates that there is in fact a cistern near the castle in almost the exact place indicated by the memoirists. 'Die Cistern mit zwei Brunnenöffnungen ist in gutem Zustande; ein Rundbogenthor führt uns in die niedrigen dunklen Zimmer' ['The cistern, with two well openings, is in good condition; A round bog gate leads us into the low dark rooms'].[50] Further contesting Geisendorf's claim is the fact that maps by both Ducor and Gille clearly indicate that 'un théâtre établi dans une citerne' ['a theatre established in a cistern'] in exactly the same position as the existing cistern or *aljibe* on the hillside next to the castle. All evidence points to the theatre being located in the ruined cistern near the castle.

Material Conditions

From the mid-ninth century, the *aljibe*, or reservoir, was an important element in Moorish castles. Aljibe's immense basement dedicated to storing rainwater both for ordinary needs as well as in cases of siege. Approximately 100 yards downhill from the castle, there is an old cistern that matches the descriptions provided by the memoirists. The cistern at Cabrera would have remained unused for centuries and there would have been old water inside. Lardier suggests that Guillemard 'jeta donc les yeux sur une vaste citerne tombant en ruine, dont les conduits étaient brisés depuis longtemps et dont une partie de la voûte était écroulée' ['turned his sights upon a vast cistern, falling into ruin, the conduits of which had long since fallen apart and part of the roof collapsed'].[51]

Converting a centuries old cistern into a working theatre would not have been an easy task. The first task was to clear out the centuries of brackish water

[49] Wagré, p. 87.
[50] Archduke Ludwig Salvator, *Die Balearen* (Wüzburg; Leipzig: K.u.K. Hofbuchhandlung von Leo Woerl, 1897), p. 250.
[51] A. Lardier, *Histoire des pontons et prisons d'Angleterre pendant la guerre du Consulat et de l'Empire*, II (Paris: Au comptoir des imprimeurs-unis, 1845), p. 72.

from the bottom. Lardier gives an account of how Guillemard set about preparing the theatre:

> Il y descendit au moyen d'une corde, et trouva qu'il y avait encore dans le fond, environ un pied d'eau ou plutôt de boue. La première chose à faire était d'opérer le dessèchement […] Le sergent voulut d'abord construire une pompe, mais après plusieurs tentatives infructueuses il y renonça.[52]
>
> [He descended by means of a rope, and found that there was still at the bottom about a foot of water, or rather of mud. The first thing to do was to dry it out […] The sergeant first wanted to build a pump, but after several unsuccessful attempts, he abandoned the idea.]

Instead, Lardier notes that Guillemard ordered buckets from Palma and then hired four prisoners 'à deux sous par jour chacun' [at two sous per day each'] to complete the job. According to Lardier, the job took approximately three days. He notes that when the brackish water was removed from the cistern, Guillemard gathered pinewood and lit a fire inside the cistern to clean out the inside and temper the walls. Lardier says that he spent an entire day putting sand and stones along one side of the cistern that formed the stage. To decorate the interior of the cistern theatre, Lardier mentions that '[Guillemard] se procura de l'ocre et de la sanguine, barbouilla les murs en jaune, avec une bordure rouge' ['Guillemard procured ochre and sanguine paint, then painted the walls in yellow with a red border'].[53] Finally, they 'suspendit tout autour des bordures de feuillage dont il se servit aussi pour séparer le théâtre d'avec la salle' ['hung around the room borders of foliage, which he also used to separate the auditorium from the stage']. Lardier also mentions that the prisoners wrote on the wall at the back of the stage: castigat ridendo mores. [Laughter corrects morals][54] Gille's description supports Lardier's: 'De vieilles toiles de tentes, des roseaux servirent à faire des décorations. On fit venir de Palma quelques couleurs

[52] Lardier, II, p. 73.
[53] Lardier, II, p. 73.
[54] Lardier, II, p. 73.

communes pour les peindre' ['Old canvas from tents and reeds were used to make the decorations. Some common colours were brought from Palma to paint them'].[55]

The *ajibe* next to the castle on Cabrera measures approximately ten metres in length by fifteen metres wide which is approximately 150 square metres. Lardier records that there were 'trois cents personnes dans la citerne' ['300 people in the cistern'] and that prisoners were charged 'deux sous' ['two sous'].[56] From November 1809 to July 1810, the prisoners performed in the cistern theatre on Cabrera. The English version of Guillemard's memoir gives some indication of the material conditions of the theatricals, which improved over time as the prisoners were able to reinvest their takings into better props and costume. Guillemard says that:

> Our funds increased amazingly, as well as our general comforts. We left half of our profits to the general fund, and divided the rest […] I had already bought a curtain for my theatre; I had obtained ropes, nails, a hammer, and even a hatchet, for which a Spaniard had made me pay a most exorbitant price; all these objects were intended to aid us in our theatrical arrangements, but they could also be of use in our grand project, which we had not lost sight of; every evening we carefully locked them up in our hut.[57]

There is evidence that merchants from Majorca came to Cabrera to trade with the prisoners. It is feasible that materials such as ropes, nails, hammers, and hatchets could be purchased to props and simple machinery for the theatre. Lardier mentions that the prisoners 'ne put ne put jamais avoir des armes' ['were never allowed to have weapons'] and therefore had to make do with 'de poignards et de glaives de bois' ['wooden daggers and swords'] as props for the

[55] Gille, p. 218.
[56] Lardier, II, p. 75.
[57] Guillemard, p. 74. This note only appears in the English version of Guillemard's memoir. The French version edited by Lardier does not give any indication that funds were re-invested back into the theatre.

theatricals.[58] While there is a possibility that the prisoners could obtain cloth and fabrics to make costumes and curtains for the theatre, most evidence suggests that clothing was a limited resource on Cabrera. The British captain of HMS Alarcity, the guard ship in the bay, reported on the state of the prisoners that some did not have 'a vestige of clothing to cover their nakedness!'[59] The head of the prisoners' council, De Maussac, also noted that some of the prisoners on Cabrera were 'sans culottes, sans souliers ['without breeches, without shoes'].[60]

Clothing was at a premium on Cabrera, so it is unlikely that the prisoners would have been able to afford to have any costumes. Lardier mentions that one sergeant in the prisoners' council made costumes for some of the actors, noting that the costumes 'n'étaient pas très brillants, ni même très frais, mais qui, à tout prendre, valaient mieux que les guenilles sous lesquelles avaient paru jusqu'alors les héros de l'antiquité el les marquis de Molière' ['were not very brilliant, or even very fresh, but which, on the whole, were worth more than the rags under which hitherto the heroes of antiquity and the marquis of Moliere had appeared.'][61] The actors most likely used their own tattered uniforms for costumes and could not afford to change whether they were playing Philoctète or le marquis de Mascarille.

Records indicate that the storm and flood struck Cabrera at some point in the early weeks of November leaving a catastrophic loss of life, destroying both the hospital and the improvised theatre near the beach. If Gille is correct that the citerne theatre was prepared for 8th November, it means the prisoners wasted no time between the destruction of the theatre on the beach, and the creation of the cistern theatre. The speed and efficiency with which they create the theatre, not to mention the fact they expended such valuable resources of time, money, and labour underlines the urgency and importance of creating a suitable venue to perform theatre.

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[58] Lardier, II, p. 77.
[59] Letter from Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, bart., 16 July 1810, TNA: ADM 7/41.
[60] Letter from De Maussac to Don Antonio Desbrulls [n.d.], APM: Fons Desbrulls L-2, 208.
[61] Lardier, II, p. 77; references may be to *Philoctète* and Le marquis de Mascarille in Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659).

The Talma and Brunet of Cabrera

While the theatricals on the Isla de Leon were performed by marionettes, Ducor writes that on Cabrera 'les acteurs étaient vivans' ['the actors were alive]. 'Nous avions notre Talma, et même notre Brunet', he writes ['we had our own Talma and even our Brunet'].[62] François Joseph Talma (1763-1826) was a French actor famous for his roles in tragedies at the Comédie-Française. Jean-Joseph Mira, a.k.a Brunet, (1766-1853) was a French comic actor who later directed the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris from 1820 to 1830. He became famous for performing stock characters in many of the most popuar vaudevilles in Paris including the role of Jocrisse. He was also a comedian famous for his cross-dress roles in vaudeville.

The Talma of Cabrera may have been Jean-Baptiste Lafontaine. Lafontaine was a 19-year-old sergeant at the Battle of Bailen, but he had previously worked as an actor on the Paris stage as a *jeune premier* at the Théâtre des Troubadours in Paris.[63] Lafontaine would later become one of the leading stars at Portchester Castle, taking the premier male role, he also turned his hand to writing a melodrama, *Roséliska*, in which he also took the lead role.

While we know that there were approximately 40 women on the island, according to Ducor, 'nous n'avions pas d'actrices; de toutes les femmes qui partageaient notre captivité, il n'y en avait pas une à qui l'on pût confier un rôle' ['we had no actresses; of all the women who shared our captivity there were none who could be entrusted with a role'].[64] Apparently the women on the island were deemed unsuitable for the theatricals, and there is no evidence that they took part in the theatrical performances. Nevertheless, evidence suggests the prisoners still opted for plays with female roles which meant that male prisoners played female roles. Quantin notes that the *premier rôle en femme* [lead female role] was played by Hippolyte Sutat. Sutat was a *maréchal-de-logis au dixième*

[62] Ducor, p. 245.
[63] See Quantin, II, p. 149 and Lafontaine's entry at Portchester Castle can be found at TNA: ADM 103/334. Nicole Wild lists the Théâtre des Troubadours repertoire as 'comédies mêlées d'ariettes, vaudevilles, parodies d'opéras'. See Wild, *Dictionnaire des théâtres,* p. 404.
[64] Ducor, p. 245.

régiment de dragons and from the physical description provided in the registration book for Portchester Castle, he fits a somewhat feminine description with a slender build, and small stature (5 foot, 6 inches), brown hair and blue eyes would appear to have been the most suitable physical dimension for the *première rôle en femme*.[65]

Actors, Musicians, Dancers

As we shall see, in July 1810 the officers and *sous-officier* from Cabrera were transported to Portchester Castle in England where they created a theatre. Quantin provides a list of the actors and *sociétaires* at Portchester Castle. The playbills and scripts from Portchester Castle also provide evidence of actors and the roles they played. Although Gille suggests that there were playbills advertising the plays on Cabrera, none of them have survived. However, we know that many (but not all) of the prisoners at Portchester Castle were also on Cabrera. We can therefore assume they may have acted similar roles. Aside from Lafontaine and Sutat, other actors on Cabrera included Bernard Louis Bancelin (*jeune premier*), Louis-François Gille (*fleuriste, jeune premier*) and Joseph Quantin (*copiste, page ingénu*). Known musicians and dancers include: Marc-Antoine Corret (*chef d'orchestre*), Jean-Louis Rocard (*deuxième flute*) and Joseph Thenard (*danseur*).[66] Thillaye also writes there were several musicians who 'avaient été assez heureux pour sauver des instruments; d'autres parvinrent à s'en procurer ; et nous eûmes bientôt des concerts règles' ['had been fortunate enough to keep their instruments. Others were able to procure them; and we soon had regular concerts'].[67] It is likely that many of the prisoners carried their own instruments with them throughout captivity.[68]

Repertoire

[65] Gille, p. 266. Register for Hippolyte Sutat can be found at TNA: ADM 103/336.
[66] Quantin, II, pp. 149-55.
[67] Thillaye, p. 18.
[68] There is but a single letter undated in the Desbrulls archives from the General Privé's aide-de-campe asking for his guitar.

Evidence for the repertoire of plays performed by the prisoners on Cabrera is scant and uneven. Wagré notes 'des pièces rédigées de mémoire' ['the plays were written down from memory'] though no playscripts have survived from Cabrera, so we must rely exclusively on the memoirs of the prisoners themselves.[69] However, just as there are conflicting reports about the theatre spaces, there are equally conflicting accounts from the memoirists of the repertoire performed at Cabrera. Each memorist provides a different account of what plays were performed, and none of them support each other.

Guillemard notes that the prisoners inaugurated the new cistern theatre with a performance of Jean-François de La Harpe's *Philoctète* (1781). Gille lists three specific vaudevilles: Louis François Dorvigny's *Le Désespoir de Jocrisse* (1792), François Léger's *Le Billet de logement* (1799), and Desaugiers, Duval and Tournay's *Monsieur Vautour* (1805), along with at least one performance of an opéra comique, Sedaine's *Le Déserteur* (1769).[70] Gille also mentions that the prisoners performed Molière, Jean-François Regnard and Pierre-Augustin de Beaumarchais, but gives no indication exactly which works by these three playwrights were performaned at Cabrera.[71]

Although Gille does not give us specific titles of plays performed by Molière, Regnard and Beaumarchais, it is possible to make some reasonable deductions based on other evidence in this study. If we examine the prisoners' theatrical repertoire out of the chronological sequence, we see that the prisoners were performing plays by Beaumarchais and Regnard at Portchester Castle. As we will see in the next chapter, in July 1810, the prisoners are transported to England where they establish a theatre in the basement of the keep at Portchester Castle. In his list of the repertoire from Portchester Castle, Quantin includes Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775) and Regnard's *Les Folies amoureuses* (1704).[72] In addition to these mentions in Quantin's memoir, existing playbills from Portchester Castle document that the prisoners' performed

[69] Wagré, p. 79.
[70] Guillemard, p. 109; Gille, p. 210.
[71] Gille, p. 247.
[72] Quantin, II, pp. 247-48.

Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* on 25 October and 7 November 1810.[73] With this in mind, it is plausible to assume that *Le Barbier* was among the favourite plays to be performed by the prisoners, and that it would most likely have been one of the Beaumarchais pieces to be performed on Cabrera. The play was one of the most successful in Paris with a staggering total of 313 performances in the 1790s.[74] Similarly, we know that Regnard's *Les Folies amoureuses* was highly popular with 280 performances in Paris between 1789 and 1799.[75] Unfortunately there is no evidence of any Molière being performed at Portchester Castle.[76] However, Lardier's comments about 'les marquis de Molière' ['the marquis of Moliere'][77] suggests that the prisoners may have been performing Molière's one-act satire, *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659).

Taken as a whole, there are a few observations about the repertoire on Cabrera that become immediately apparent. To begin with, we note that all of the plays have a relatively low production value. That is, they do not require any complicated scenes changes or stage effects and can be performed in a confined space with limited resources. While the prisoners have expanded their scope beyond the marionette theatre, they do not quite have the capabilities to perform *à grand spectacle* as we will see when they arrive at Portchester Castle in the next chapter. All of the works performed, with the exception of *Philoctète,* are comedies. The prisoners are using humour and comedy to alleviate their suffering and survive in the harsh and inhospitable conditions of Cabrera. Beyond this, we will see that many of the plays in the repertoire share a similar theme of imprisonment and escape and many of the plays, including vaudevilles, feature strong sentimental and nostalgic themes of returning home.

Dramaturgy and Staging

[73] See Playbills, V&A, THM/415/2/1-18.
[74] See Kennedy, p. 102.
[75] Kennedy, p. 382.
[76] The most successful Molière comedies between 1789 and 1799 were *L'Ecole des maris* with 316 performances, *Le Dépit amoureux* with 307, and *Le Médecin malgré lui* with 284 performances. See Kennedy, p. 382.
[77] Lardier, II, p. 77; references may be to *Philoctète* and Le marquis de Mascarille in Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659).

In terms of staging, *Philoctète* might have been the easiest of all the *grandes pièces* to be produced at Cabrera. Based on a tragedy by Sophocles, La Harpe's *Philoctète* is set on an isolated Greek island of Lemnos and tells the story of how Neoptolemus and Odysseus arrive and attempt to convince the suffering soldier, Philoctète, to join them in their voyage to Troy. In severe pain, the aging Philoctète argues with Neoptolemus and Odysseus and refuses to journey with them on the grounds that he has no part in the Trojan wars. Eventually Heracles intervenes and tells Philoctète that if he travels to Troy and fights, his pain will vanish.

Guillemard states of *Philoctète* that 'all the allusions to our situation in the tragedy were noticed with a tact that would have done honour to the taste of a more brilliant assembly'.[78] The central themes of fraternity, honour, and loyalty to one's country resonate with the prisoners themselves. The play also had pragmatic benefits for the prisoners of Cabrera. For instance, the action takes place in situ in Philoctète's cave, removing any need for scene changes. In staging *Philoctète* the prisoners used the island itself to their advantage. The opening lines spoken by Ulysse describe the scene, 'Nous voici dans Lemnos, dans cette île sauvage' ['Here we are on Lemnos, on this wild island'].[79] The play is set in similar surroundings to those found on Cabrera—this 'île sauvage' could easily have been Cabrera. Furthermore, *Philoctète* had the added advantage of being an all-male cast.[80]

Beaumarchais's *Le Barbier de Séville* and Regnard's *Les Folies amoureuses* may have proven somewhat more difficult to stage in the cistern theatre of Cabrera. *Le Barbier de Séville* introduces the character of Figaro who remains the principal protagonist throughout the Figaro trilogy (*Le Barbier de Séville, Le Mariage de Figaro* and *La Mère Coupable*). In Act I of *Le Barbier*, the beautiful young Rosine is being held captive by her guardian, Doctor Bartholo, at his house in Seville. Courting Rosine in the street outside is Count

[78] Guillemard, p. 110.
[79] *Philoctète*, I. 1.
[80] As we have seen, this was not necessarily a problem for the actors of Cabrera. However, if *Philoctète* was indeed the first play performed at Cabrera, as Guillemard suggest, then Hippolyte Sutat may not have been incorporated into the theatrical milieu yet, and therefore plays with all male casts might have been preferable.

Almaviva who encounters his former valet, Figaro, currently working as a barber in Seville. With Figaro's help, Almaviva infiltrates Bartholo's house first disguised as a soldier, Lindor. When his disguise is discovered as false, Almaviva returns as Alonso, a former student of Don Bazile, Rosine's music tutor. In a quick-paced Act III, Bartholo is outwitted and the Count marries Rosine.

The main action of *Le Barbier de Séville* and *Les Folies amoureuses* are set roughly within one physical location—Bartholo's house and the Count's house, respectively—with the characters moving in and through the scenes. The fast-paced plot of *Le Barbier* require a number of quick entrances and exits, and also require key characters to hide on stage at a various points in the story. For instance, in Act I of *Le Barbier*, the Count and Figaro hide away while Doctor Bartholo searches outside his house. There is a certain amount of suspended reality that occurs in Beaumarchais's plays, asking the audience to understand what Jacques Scherer has aptly termed the 'troisième lieu' ['third space'].[81] While most plays of the period require the spectator to imagine just two separate locations: 'on stage', represented by the stage set, and 'off-stage', the nearby location in the wings, Beaumarchais often invents, or obliges the audience to imagine a third kind. According to Scherer, this 'troisième lieu' is different in nature from the other two; for while these are usually static, the 'troisième lieu' is endowed with a dynamic quality, which produces certain features that can be quite complex. It is related to such universal, and fundamental, theatricals concepts as hiding-places, surprise, disguise and illusion. Beaumarchais shows great virtuousity in his use of the dynamic and ambiguous characterstics of the 'third space'. How did the performers of Cabrera negotiate this "third space"? A prime example of this surprise, disguise and illusion comes into play during Act III of *Le Barbier*, the Count comes to Bartholo's house disguised as Lindor, a replacement to Rosine's usual music teacher, Bazile. Lindor accompanies Rosine on the piano as she sings. Bartholo begins to fall asleep, and each time he does, the Count (disguised as Lindor) begins kissing Rosine. Eventually, Figaro arrives

[81] Jacques Scherer, *La dramaturgie de Beaumarchais* (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1954), pp. 172-81.

and tries to distract Dr. Bartholo by shaving him so that Rosine and the Count can be alone together, but Bartholo catches on to the scheme when Bazile arrives to give Rosine her music lesson. The Count discreetly hands Bazile a bag of money, bribing him to play along, and they are able to allay Bartholo's suspicions.

Successfully staging of this scene would have required a considerable amount of creative license. The prisoners did not have access to a piano as required in the original script. There is a suggestion that the prisoners had retained some of their instruments, which might have been used as an alternative. For instance, a guitar might have made a suitable replacement to the piano. There are more complex staging requirements as well and it is not entirely clear if and how the prisoners would have been able to adhere to the original text. In Act I of Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1778), for instance, the stage is bare of furniture except for an invalid's chair in the middle of the stage. Several characters are required to hide beneath this chair avoiding detection. Later, the Count's servant, Cherubin leaps from a window. Cherubin is not the only one to be thrown out of a window in the theatre of Cabrera. In the final scene of *Monsieur Vautour* (1805), the eponymous Monsieur Vautour hides in an old bookcase but reveals himself just before it is thrown from a window. How exactly the prisoners would have managed to conjure a bookcase, let alone attempt to throw it from a window, remains open to speculations.

Laughing to Survive: The Comedy of Escape

Morale on Cabrera remained low. Ducor says that captivity produced 'une telle insouciance […]. Mourir aujourd'hui, mourir demain, quand il n'y a plus qu'à souffrir, le plus tôt est le mieux, disaient-ils lamentablement' ['such insouciance […]. To die today or tomorrow, when there is only suffering: the sooner the better, they repeated sadly].[82] Clearly, the prisoners deposited on Cabrera had

[82] Ducor, pp. 197-98.

reached the lowest states of humanity. Near starvation, lacking adequate housing, clothing, coupled with the humiliation of defeat, the despair of indefinite imprisonment led to a desperate ennui and loss of motivation. A sketch produced by one of the prisoners depicts a bleak scene with prisoners slumped on the rocks of Cabrera looking forlorn and dejected (see fig. 10). The prisoners, however, made the most of their dire situation. As they did at the Isla de Leon, the prisoners on Cabrera soon turned to theatre as an escape from their misery.

Discussing the theatricals on Cabrera, Gille mentions that comedy 'charmèrent aussi successivement les ennuis de notre solitude' ['also successively charmed the troubles of our solitude'].[83] He goes on to say that the past-times 'nous aidait à supporter notre misère avec plus de résignation' ['helped us to endure our misery with more resignation'].[84] Quantin writes in troubled times the French rarely ever pass over a chance for amusement, 'et au sein même de la misère profonde où nous étions plongés nous avions su nous en créer un: c'était celui de la comédie' ['and in the midst of the deep misery into which we were plunged we had found one [escape]: it was theatre]. He goes on to say, 'Ce délassement charmait agréablement nos ennuis, et devenait pour nous une occupation importante' ['this recreation pleasantly relieved our troubles, and became an important occupation for us'].[85] Wagré writes of the more taciturn prisoners that did not participate in the theatre who 'recherchant les lieux les moins fréquentés, se refusaient à toute espèce d'exercice, et bientôt devenaient victimes des maladies qui se déclaraient chez eux, ou périssaient sans aucune affection apparente, et sans demander ni recevoir de secours' ['sought the less frequented places, refused any kind of exercise, and soon became victims of the diseases which they caught, or perished without any apparent ailment, and without asking or receiving assistance'].[86] The memoirists all suggest that theatre played a vital role in the prisoners' emotional and psychological survival on Cabrera.

[83] Gille, p. 247.
[84] Gille, p. 211.
[85] Quantin, II, p. 81-82.
[86] Wagré, p. 79.

With the exception of La Harpe's *Philoctète*, all evidence of the repertoire at Cabrera suggests that the prisoners were performing comedy and vaudeville. Comedy, however, went far beyond simply relieving the boredom of captivity. According to Wagré, 'ce genre de plaisir produisit le meilleur effet, et, malgré ses imperfections, il produisait en nous une illusion qui nous rapprochait de notre patrie' ['this type of pleasure produced the best effect and, despite its imperfections, produced in us an illusion that brought us closer to our homeland].[87] Wagré is not only suggesting that the plays performed provided an illusion of 'notre patrie', he is also highlighting a significant correlation between the plays and 'le meilleur effet' on the prisoners' mental and physical well-being.

There have been many studies on the effects of comedy and humour in the prisoner-of-war camps of the twentieth century.[88] Most studies reinforce the positive relationships between humour and self-esteem, arguing that exposure to humorous conditions generates 'a state of mirth' thus producing 'a cognitive-affective shift or a restructuring of the situation so that it is less threatening'.[89] In a study of human interactions within a prison environment, Marlene Nielson argues that 'humour goes far beyond amusement'. She points out that an examination of the types of humour shown between captors and captives were able at the very least to erode barriers and that, '[H]umour has a transformative potential. In transforming individual groups—and thereby also social spaces—humour is closely linked to identity work that concerns who you are, what you are doing and where you would like to be'.[90] In other words, humour links people together, underlining, celebrating and reinforcing shared identities, but also, necessarily exposing or revealing their hopes, fears, doubts and anxieties. A

[87] Ducor, p. 245.
[88] Karen Horn, 'Stalag Happy": South African Prisoners of War during World War Two (1939–1945) and their Experience and Use of Humour', *South African Historical Journal*, 63 (2011), 537-52; George Wright-Nooth and Mark Adkin, *Prisoner of the Turnip Heads: Horror, Hunger and Humour in Hong Kong, 1941-1945* (London: Leo Cooper, 1994).
[89] Abel and Maxwell, 'Humor and Affective Consequences of a Stressful Task', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology,* 21 (April 2002), 165-87.
[90] Marlene Nielson, 'On Humour in Prison', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8 (2011), 500-14 (pp. 500-01).

closer inspection of the theatrical repertoire and individual texts performed on Cabrera reveals how these questions, and their answers, are manifest on stage.

The prisoners on Cabrera had already suffered a great deal by the time they arrived on the island and now they faced a grim fate. Naturally they longed for repatriation to France, to return to a life that was comfortable and familiar. The prisoners did not idly wait for their liberation; instead, they actively endeavoured to appear what they ought to be. In this manner, humour was not only reflective, it was also aspirational. Humour served as a temporary escape from the suffering endured on the island. On a literal level, we find recurring themes of trial, imprisonment and more importantly, escape in the repertoire. Regnard's *Les Folies amoureuses* and Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville,* for instance, both feature a young heroine imprisoned in a domestic setting.[91] *Les Folies amoureuses* is the story of a young woman, Agathe, being held prisoner by her guardian, Albert, who inteds to marry her. With the ingenuity of Albert's servant, Lisette, and the cunning valet, Crispin, a clever strategy is devised to help Agathe escape her captivity and unite with her beloved, Eraste. The plot is almost identical to Beaumarchais's comedy, which sees young Rosine held captive by her guardian, Doctor Bartholo. With the help of Count Almaviva's clever former servant, Figaro, Rosine is freed from her domestic prison, and is united with Count Almaviva.

At the beginning of *Les Folies amoureuses,* Albert is busy fixing bars on Agathe's room so she cannot escape.

> Je veux, du haut en bas, faire attacher des grilles,
> Et que de bons barreaux, larges comme la main,
> Puissent servir d'obstacle à tout effort humain.[92]
>
> [From top to bottom I want to fix the grills,
> So that these good bars, as wide as the hand,
> May serve as an obstacle to any human effort.]

[91] This same theme is repeated in *Roséliska* written by Jean Lafontaine and performed by the prisoners at Portchester Castle in 1810. See Chapter 7.
[92] Jean-François Regnard, *Les Folies amoureuses,* 1st edn (Paris, 1704), I. 2.

Meanwhile, in Act I, Scene 4 of *Le Barbier,* Rosine longs for freedom, asking: 'seule, enfermée, en butte à la persécution d'un homme odieux, est-ce un crime de tenter à sortir d'esclavage?' ['alone, shut away, persecuted by this odious man, is it a crime to attempt to escape from slavery ?'].[93] Safely veiled by laughter, both plays speak to a longing that the prisoners themselves, like Agathe and Rosine, had for freedom. In *Les Folies* this 'obstacle à tout effort humain' ['obstactle to all human effort'] is overcome and the play ends with Albert's tyranny thwarted, and Agathe and Eraste getting married. Meanwhile, in *Le Barbier*, Rosine is married to Count Almaviva.

Researchers Rahe and Geneder have shown a strong link between humour and control.[94] They found that the use of humour was a way of exercising some control as well as a means of coping, writing that 'the use of humor has an immense coping value. Getting the best of one's guards, on occasion, not only provides humorous remembrances that can be savored later, but gives captives a moment of control in what otherwise is a totally uncontrolled situation'.[95] One study of humour in the prison environment suggests that humour can work by creating a 'division between one group and another, as could be the case between captor and captive'.[96] Henman believes that humour creates an 'internal sense of mirth' and humor, their reliance on one another, and their group interactions all combined to create a system for survival.[97] Humour provided the framework for coping with their captivity, allowing the prisoners to counter the ennui and depression of captivity, linking themselves together in therapeutic laughter.

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[93] Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *Le Barbier de Séville, ou la Précaution inutile,* 1st edn (Paris: Ruault, 1775), I. 4.
[94] Richard Rahe and Ellen Geneder, 'Adaptation To and Recovery from Captivity Stress', *Military Medicine*, 148 (1983), 577-85.
[95] Rahe and Geneder, p. 580.
[96] H.R. Polio, R. Mers, and W. Lucchesi, 'Humor, Laughter, and Smiling: Some Preliminary Observations of Funny Behaviours', in *The Psychology of Humor*, ed. Goldstein and McGhee (New York & London: Academic Press, 1972), p. 237.
[97] Linda Henman, 'Humor as a Coping Mechanism: Lessons from POWs', *International Journal of Humor Research,* 14:1 (2008), 83-94 (p. 84).

Ultimately these comedies dupe the gaoler, making him look like a fool. Both plays present subversive elements that allow the prisoners to transform the captor or gaoler into the object of laughter. In both plays, the captor is thwarted, becoming the object of mockery and ridicule, while freedom and victory are celebrated in song and dance. Indeed music and dance are linked with freedom and escape. In *Le Barbier*, for example, the mode of Rosine's freedom is the cunning plan to disguise the Count as the former pupil of Rosine's music teacher, Don Bazille. Music and performance are correlative with duplicity and ultimately with freedom. The fact that both liberators, Crispin and Figaro, were both former soldiers is no mistake either. In both *Les Folies* and *Le Barbier*, music and the military converge to present a theme of escape on both literal and figurative levels. The theatre itself serves as a valuable realm of escape from the grim reality, while at the same time presenting themes of escape that coalesce with the prisoners' own hopes of escape, and ultimately a return home.

Parallels between the prisoners and their repertoire become even more evident in their production of Sedaine's opéra-comique, *Le Déserteur*. Humour is used to different effect in this three-act opéra-comique, which speaks directly to the prisoners as the main character is a soldier in the army. *Le Déserteur* tells the story of a soldier, Alexis, who is engaged to be married to Louise. At the beginning of the play, Alexis mistakenly believes that Louise is intending to marry someone else. In despair Alexis wanders off close to the border where he is apprehended and accused of attempting to desert the army. Louise goes to see the king to beg for Alexis' pardon. At the last minute she receives a letter of reprieve but faints from exhaustion before she is able to deliver it. All ends happily, however, when the king's reprieve is delivered and Alexis is released. In Act II, when Alexis ends up in gaol for desertion, he makes his utter dejection known:

> Mourir ce n'est rien, c'est notre dernière heure:
> Hé, ne faut-il pas que je meure?
> Chaque minute, chaque pas,
> Ne mène-t-il pas

Au trépas?
Mais souffrir une perfidie
Aussi sanglante, aussi hardie
Y survivre, ah, plutôt mourir!
Ce n'est que cesser de souffrir.[98]

[To die is nothing, it is our last hour:
Hey, do not I have to die?
Every minute, every step,
Does it not lead
To death?
But to suffer a perfidy
So bloody, so bold
And survive it, ah, rather die!
It is just ceasing to suffer.]

Alexis's despair is no doubt a feeling shared by the prisoners in their helpless state of captivity. In prison, Alexis is joined by the jovial drunkard, Montauciel, who lashes out at desertion, singing the air, 'Je ne déserterai jamais'.[99] On Cabrera, desertion was a real and topical issue. In August 1809, Gille recalls that a Spanish frigate arrived on Cabrera, authorised to receive any prisoners who wished to fight in the Spanish army. According to Gille, approximately 77 prisoners, mainly Swiss and Italians took the offer. 'Le reste aima mieux souffrir un esclavage plus terrible que la mort, que de trahir à la fois l'honneur et la patrie' ['the rest preferred to suffer a slavery more terrible than death, rather than betray both our honour and country'].[100] The performance of *Le Déserteur* no doubt reflected the sense of betrayal that Gille and his fellow

[98] *Le Déserteur*, II. 1.
[99] *Le Déserteur*, II. 2.
[100] Gille, p. 209.

Frenchmen felt upon the desertion from their ranks.[101] One can only speculate that this offer in August 1809 presented a crisis of conscience for many French prisoners on Cabrera. The offer to leave the island must have been extremely tempting, testing their loyalty to each other, to Napoleon, and by extension, to France itself.

Unlike *Les Folies amoureuses* or *Le Barbier*, the comic action of *Le Déserteur* does not lead to an escape, but rather to a release facilitated both by the loving fidelity of Louise and her determination to clear Alexis of any wrongdoing, and ultimately granted by the benevolent grace of the king. The dramatic action of the play centres around Alexis languishing in prison, taunted by the gaoler, amused by his fellow prisoner, the drunkard, Montauciel, while contemplating his own fate. As with *Le Barbier* and *Le Mariage*, Sedaine's opéra comique crosses comedy with pathos to useful effect. Indeed both Alexis and Figaro become more than comic characters, they become flawed human beings, characters that the prisoners themselves can sympathize with.[102]

Escapes serve several functions in the repertoire of Cabrera. On one level, humour is used to fantasize about escape, to laugh at Figaro's clever antics to unite the Count and Rosine in *Le Barbier*. At the same time, the prisoners laugh to rejoice when the gaoler is out-witted or overthrown. In this way, the entire system of captive, captor is made ridiculous and slightly less threatening. The very process of laughing at themselves and their gaolers through the comedy performed on Cabrera serves as a personal escape from the daily agony faced by the prisoners. As Gille says, these plays worked to alleviate 'les ennuis de notre solitude'.[103] Laughter was not merely a fantasy reflecting the dreams, ambitions and desires of the prisoners, it was also a form of resistance. As Figaro says in Act I, Scene 2 of *Le Barbier,* 'L'habitude du malheur. Je me presse de rire de

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[101] For more on the problem of desertion in the French army see Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (New York, 1989).

[102] In Act 5, Scene 3 of Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro*, Figaro reveals that he was imprisoned. '…Aussitôt je vois, du fond d'un fiacre, baisser pour moi le pont d'un château-fort, à l'entrée duquel je laissai l'espérance et la liberté'. 'Las de nourrir un obscur pensionnaire, on me met un jour dans la rue ; et comme il faut dîner, quoiqu'on ne soit plus en prison…'

[103] Gille, p. 247.

tout, de peur d'être obligé d'en pleurer' ['the habit of misfortune. I hurry to laugh at everything, for fear of being forced to cry'].[104] Through laughter, the prisoners fought 'l'habitude du malheur', which on some level equated to escaping their captivity. Therefore it comes as little surprise that the prisoners labelled their theatre with the Latin inscription: *Obliviscitur ridendo malum* [Laughter cures sadness]'.[105]

Escape took other manifestations as well within the repertoire of Cabrera. In addition to making prisoners laugh, the theatricals on Cabrera served another vital purpose. According to Ducor, the theatricals on Cabrera created 'une illusion qui nous rapprochait de notre patrie'.[106] Ducor's comment is particularly poignant given the recurring theme of the departed soldier. *Le Billet de logement* deals with issues of military absence and patriotism in a way that might have been important for the prisoners on Cabrera. *Le Billet de logement,* a one-act comedy by François Léger originally premiered on 4th May 1799 at the Théâtre des Troubadours.[107] The play is set in the house of Madame Laroche whose nephew, Dalincourt, left for the military as a young man. When he returns he falls in love with his cousin, Rose, Madame Laroche's daughter. Dalincourt works to secure a *billet de logement,* which would allow him to remain at Laroche's house.[108] Laroche, however, tired of military personnel staying at her home, rejects the request. Dalincourt prepares to leave and Laroche learns his true identity. Dalincourt finally marries Rose at a large feast. In Act I, Rose echoes the worries and concerns of having a beloved soldier far from home for a prolonged period:

Que fatigué d'un long voyage,

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[104] *Le Barbier de Séville*, I. 2.
[105] Gille, pp. 218.
[106] Ducor, p. 245.
[107] Kennedy, p. 188.
[108] Billeting was a common practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where military personnel were accomodated in civilian lodgings. The prisoners from Bailen had personal experience of billeting. The majority had been billeted to civilian housing on their initial march to Bayonne in 1807 and when they arrived in Madrid in 1808. Again, following their surrender at Bailen, they were billeted in Séville, Cordoba, and various towns and villages in Andalucia. Billeting also serves as a central plot device in Beauchmarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775).

Un soldat arrive en ces lieux,
Quelque soit son rang ou son âge,
J'aime à le traiter de mon mieux.
J'ai l'espérance consolante
Que dans quelque climat lointain,
Peut-être une main bienfaisante
En fait autant pour mon cousin.[109]

[If tired from a long journey,
A soldier arrives in this place,
Whatever his rank or age,
I like to treat him the best I can.
I have the consoling hope
That in some distant clime,
Perhaps a beneficial hand
Does as much for my cousin.]

Dalincourt, a 20-year-old officer in the French army, was not entirely unlike many of the prisoners on Cabrera in age, and in his displacement. The sense of absence and longing for home are felt when he sings the air 'Jeunes Filles':

Apres une longue absence,
Que prescrivit le devoir
Lieux chéris de notre enfance,
Qu'il est doux de vous revoir !
Parmi les dangers, les alarmes,
Au milieu du fracas des armes,
La gloire avec tous ses charmes,
Parmi le fracas des armes,
Du guerrier soutient l'espoir.[110]

[109] Léger, *Le Billet de Logement*, I. 1.

[After a long absence,
Prescribed by duty
Dear place of our childhood,
How sweet it is to see you again!
Among the dangers, alarms,
Amid the clash of arms,
Glory with all its charms,
Among the clash of arms,
Supports the warrior's hope.]

The air laments the soldier's absence, and hopes of return. Imbued within this comedy is the sad message of a soldier returning home unrecognised over time.[111] Emeljanow suggests that theatre in the WWII prisoner of war camps served as a survival strategy not only for its power 'to preserve and reinforce those values particularly in an environment that threatened to neutralize them'. Theatre also served 'to keep memory alive: if a prisoner could not make sense of the future and the present was a state of powerlessness, then only the past offered a key to psychological survival both for the individual and for the collective'.[112] Theatre served as a common connection to revitalise and refresh the memory of the prisoners' Britishness that risked being lost or forgotten. In a similar way, the French prisoners of Cabrera are doing the same thing. Whether it is naming the Palais-Royal or performing classics of the Comédie-Française in a cistern, the prisoners appear to be making a microcosm of French life on Cabrera. Doing so suggests they are making every attempt to keep memories alive, exercising a sense of cultural identity that risks being lost or forgetten by prolonged captivity.

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[110] *Le Billet de logement*, I. 5. 11.
[111] The theme of a returning soldier is repeated once again at Portchester Castle in the prisoners' own play, *Roséliska*, in which the hero Stanislas is returning home after a prolonged period away at war.
[112] Emeljanow, 'Pantomimes', p. 283.

Nostalgia

One of the most immediate and obvious observations to make about the repertoire at Cabrera is that they were written before the Revolution during the *ancien régime*. It is tempting to offer the suggestion that prisoners chose *ancien régime* playwrights out of a desire to channel a world of security and social harmony pre-1789 Revolution. According to Svetlana Boym, nostalgic longing for the past is a natural repercussion of Revolutionary upheaval. In her book, *The Future of Nostalgia*, she argues that '[O]utbreaks of nostalgia often follow revolutions', and the French Revolution of 1789 was 'accompanied by political and cultural manifestations of longing'.[113] She points out that in the French Revolution 'it is not only the *ancien régime* that produced revolution, but in some respect the revolution produced the *ancien régime*, giving it a shape, a sense of closure, and a gilded aura'. According to Boym, the aftermath of the French Revolution created a wave of nostalgic sentiment or 'longing' for the world that had been upturned. She is careful to point out, however, that this nostalgia is not always for the *ancien régime* itself but rather for 'the unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that became obsolete'.[114] Peter Fritzsche echoes this notion when he says nostalgia 'not only cherishes the past for the distinctive qualities that are no longer present, but also acknowledges the permanence of their absence'.[115] In other words, nostalgic longing is not a desire to return to the past itself, but rather an active acknowledgement that the past is past, can never be lived again.

Certainly there was a lively discourse of nostalgic longing in early nineteenth-century France. In the early 1800s, diplomat Charles Talleyrand (1754-1838) famously wrote of 'la douceur de vivre' ['the sweet life'] that existed before the Revolution.[116] Talleyrand's praise of the eighteenth-century—its music, theatre, painting, architecture—highlights an undercurrent of longing for the past even in the early nineteenth-century Empire period, for that 'bonheur

[113] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*: (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xvi.
[114] Boym, p. xvi.
[115] Peter Fritzsche, "Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity," *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 1587–1618 (p. 1592).
[116] Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord: *Mémoires du Prince de Talleyrand: La Confession de Talleyrand, V*. 1-5 Chapter: La jeunesse – Le cercle de Madame du Barry.

dans la vie', the sweetness of life, that he associates with life under the *ancien régime*. Along the same lines as Talleyrand, the politician and memoirist Chateaubriand writes, 'there is always a time when we possessed nothing of what we now possess, and a time when we have nothing of what we once had'.[117] He goes on to say that 'a straggler in this life has witnessed the death, not only of men, but also of ideas: principles, customs, tastes, pleasures, sorrows, opinions, none of these resembles what he used to know. He belongs to a different race from the human species among which he ends his days'.[118] Of course both Talleyrand and Chateaubriand had their own reasons for expressing a longing for a gilded age before the Revolution that do not necessary equate to the prisoners from Bailen. Nevertheless, their sentiments reflect a sense of the 'good ole days' syndrome that glorified the past. In miserable circumstances, with a bleak and uncertain future, it is perhaps understandable that the prisoners of Cabrera might have found a safe and secure realm in the past.

Molière and Regnard represent the golden age of French comedy. Figures from the Comédie-Française calendar of performances show that Molière was the third most performed playwright in the 1790s.[119] Even in 1809-10, these playwrights would have been considered box-office hits. The fact that they are not new comedies may have been part of their appeal for the prisoners, particularly for the commissioned officers. These were established classics, plays that had proved successful in Paris, and that were deeply entrenched in the French comic traditions.

The experience of Cabrera is perhaps the most desperate of the three locations covered in this study. The prisoners had been abandoned on a remote island in the middle of the Mediterranean. Chances of rescue, release or survival were slim, almost non-existent. The prisoners' themselves had no idea how long they would be held on the island. At that moment in time, it could be years until they are rescued, or left to die of starvation, malnutrition, disease or suicide. In

[117] François-René de Chateaubriand, *The Memoirs of Chateaubriand*, selected and translated by Robert Baldick (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 73.
[118] Chateaubriand, p. 174.
[119] Mechele Leon, *Molière, the French Revolution and the Theatrical Afterlife* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2009), p. 14.

this turbulent and frustrating world where the present was an unbearable hell, and the future is completely beyond their control, the prisoners instead turned to the past. They turned to a world that is known and familiar, a world that is safe and certain.

The plays they performed were the theatrical equivalent of comfort food, familiar and delicious, and they served a purpose—to evoke memories of happier times, and to satisfy a 'fantasy of return'. These plays are unmistakeably French and deeply enshrined in the national canon of dramatic works. In the unknown, uncertain world of imprisonment on Cabrera, these particular comedies anchor the prisoners to an idea of Frenchness deeply rooted in their dramatic heritage, allowing them to draw together the threads of their own cultural identity that is at risk of being lost or forgotten by their harrowing and indefinite captivity.

Conclusion:

Described as one of 'the first concentration camps of modern history', Cabrera is arguably the worst of the prison depots covered in this study. The prisoners, exposed to inhospitable condition without shelter, saw extreme malnutrition and suffered from crippling homesickness and depression. In 1809-1810, the prisoners on Cabrera had no control over their futures. They had no idea when or if they would ever return home again. All the evidence points to the fact that the prisoners made every effort to create a microcosm of French society with a prisoners' council to maintain law and order, a market place to trade aptly called the Palais-Royal, and a theatre where they performed classics from the Comédie-Française repertoire. While these ostensibly served practical needs of life in prison camp, they also, I believe, served to establish some semblance of a familiar system of life that the prisoners had known before the war, and to which their identities were deeply rooted, potentially helping the prisoners come to terms with a life that had no future. In this way, the prisoners turned to the past. Through familiar plays the prisoners of Cabrera could imagine an escape, they could fantasize about a return home.

Chapter 7

MURDER & MELODRAMA

Théâtre des Variétés at Portchester Castle

Prisoners in flux

By the beginning of 1810, the Superior Junta of Palma was struggling to finance the prisoners on Cabrera. Politically and economically, the prisoners had become a dangerous inconvenience. Rioting against their presence had occurred in Cadiz, Mahon, and Palma.[1] The Junta of Palma seemed to be quite desperate to get rid of the prisoners. In February 1810, the junta of Palma made a direct plea to Lord Collingwood, admiral of Britain's Mediterranean fleet, based in Minorca. The request was made orally and later reported to the Admiralty in London and highlights the desperation of the Junta to remove the prisoners from their responsibility. In the report the Junta had complained that 'symptoms of discontent bordering on revolution had appeared among the Majorquins'. The authorities in Palma demonstrated an eagerness to get rid of the prisoners and suggested releasing them 'into the possession of the British'. The junta proposed 'embarking [the prisoners] ostensibly for some place with Flags of Truce, and then to be met and seized by the English'. The suggestion of floating the prisoners to neutral waters as sitting ducks for capture by the British demonstrates the Junta's desperation to get rid of the burden of the prisoners. Lord Collingwood, however, refused the request on the grounds that such an act would establish 'a precedent of practice at present unknown among European Nations that of turning Prisoners made by one Power over to another'.[2] Collingwood directly challenged the Spanish idea on the grounds that if the tables were turned, France or her allies, might in turn do the same with British prisoners of war, using the proposed model of the prisoners of Cabrera as justification for their actions.

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[1] Denis Smith provides a vivid account of the uprisings against the French in Palma. See Smith, pp. 107-13.

[2] Letter from Admiral Purvis to J.W. Croker reporting on a meeting between Lord Collingwood and Spanish Lieutenant-Colonel de Lanti that originally took place on 26 February 1810. The letter is dated 6 April 1810, TNA: ADM 1/416, no. 134.

Meanwhile, the new British ambassador in Spain, Henry Wellesley, confronted another strategic dilemma. The Spanish regular armies in the peninsular fighting Napoleon's occupying troops were near collapse, and the remnants of the Spanish navy remained idle in Cadiz Harbour, dangerously accessible to capture by the approaching French occupiers. Not all the French prisoners were evacuated to Cabrera in March 1809. About half remained in the prison hulks of the Isla de Leon. Despite the mass transport of prisoners to Cabrera and the Canary Islands in March 1809, by the spring of 1810 the *pontons* had filled up again with French prisoners captured in the ensuing Peninsular Wars. While they did not live to see the horrors of Cabrera, the remaining prisoners witnessed traumatic events in the bay of Cadiz.

While significant portions of the French prisoners were languishing in Cabrera, Napoleon had led a ruthless campaign to take control of Spain and push the British out of the Iberian Penninusla. By February 1810, the port of Cadiz came under siege by French forces from the land. Cadiz was surrounded on land by the armies of Napoleon's generals Soult and Victor, in three entrenched positions at Chiclana, Puerto Real and Santa Maria, positioned in a semicircle around the city.[3] With the French army besieging the city from land, and the British and Spanish troops garrisoned in the city of Cadiz, the French prisoners in the hulks of the Isla de Leon quite literally found themselves in the middle of one of the most pivotal moments in the Penninsular Wars, and indeed, in the future of an independent Spain whose constitution was being drafted in the famous Cortes de Cadiz.

The French prisoners left behind upon the hulks in the Isla de Leon seemed to be acutely aware of the position they held in the 'no man's land' between the Spanish mainland, and the port of Cadiz. In March, a major storm swept through the area, disrupting the already tense and over-crowded harbour. The *Hampshire Chronicle* later reported a tragic event in Cadiz harbour:

[3] For historical discussion of the siege of Cadiz see Vincente Ruiz García, *Las Naves de las Cortes: el último servicio de la Marina de la Ilustración, 1808-1812* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2013).

> French Officers confined on board the Spanish pontoon ship of the line (Castilia) disarmed the Spanish guard, cut the cables, and, as the wind blew strong on the shore, drifted and grounded [and] they had all escaped to the shore, to the number of 500 men and several women. The success of this attempt induced the prisoners in the Argonauta to follow the example of their countrymen. Having disposed of the Spanish guard, early in the afternoon […] they were observed drifting towards the shore: several gun-boats, and the boats of the men of war, were dispatched to bring her up: she had on board about 400 men, some women and children […] a shell at length set her on fire, and many of the unhappy wretches had no choice but of being burnt to death.[4]

One prison ship was able to reach the shore, but the Argonauta was sunk. The remaining pontons in the harbour would have watched helplessly as their fellow prisoners were drowned or burnt to death. Henry Wellesley and the local British commanders in Spain believed that imminent military danger required the removal of the remaining French prisoners from Cadiz, and then the moving of the Spanish fleet from Cadiz to Minorca.[5] On 27 March 1810, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington wrote to his brother Henry Wellesley recommending that he 'get rid of [the] prisoners as you can. Let them go where they please, but do not allow them to remain in Cadiz. […] England is the only safe place for the prisoners'.[6] To this end, Wellesley informed the Supreme Central Junta that

[4] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 15 June 1810. Sébastien Blaze was on-board the pontons at the time. Many of the prisoners on board the remaining pontons would have seen the events unfolding and would arrive at Portchester Castle fresh from this trauma. The event is reported from multiple sources but this article gives an indication what local British residents might have read as the French prisoners began arriving in Portchester in July-August 1810.

[5] Henry Wellesley to the Marquis of Wellesley, 9 and 10 March 1810, TNA: FO 72/92, nos 3 and 4 and enclosures.

[6] Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, *The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington: During His Various Campaigns, 1799 to 1815*, V (London: John Murray, 1838), p. 601.

Britain would allow half of the Cadiz prisoners be transported to England.[7] In May, almost new 4,000 prisoners were transported from Cadiz to England.

After repeated pleas from the Superior Junta of Palma to find a solution to the problem of the French prisoners on Cabrera, in May 1810 the Supreme Central Junta, without seeking Wellesley's approval, finally decided to remove from the Balearic Islands 'los oficiales franceses, esto es, los generals, oficiales subalternos, sargentos, cabos y marineros que se hallan presos en Cabrera' ['the French officers, of these, the generals, subofficers, sergeants, captains, and sailors who are are imprisoned on Cabrera'].[8] On 26 July 1810, a Spanish warship, and ten transports reached Cabrera to collect the selected prisoners for transport. The following day, a list of evacuees was read out—officers, *sous-officiers* and some favoured soldiers were allowed onto the transports. The Spanish had taken a dangerous gamble, hoping that Wellesley would play along and transport all the French prisoners to England. They had effectively sailed the prisoners out as sitting ducks, doing exactly what Collingwood had warned against.

While the prisoner convoy was being prepared, the Spanish foreign minister in the Council of Regency wrote to Wellesley to inform him what was happening, saying that the Junta of Palma was 'about to send to [Cadiz] eight hundred and seventy six prisoners' and then proceeded to plead for his help 'to have them sent to England'.[9] However, Wellesley did not take the bait, replying that he would not take the French convoys until the Spanish removed their remaining fleet to Minorca, and that the Spanish should have 'consulted previously to their being removed from Majorca'.[10] After a week of political negotiations the Spanish agreed to remove the remnants of their fleets from Cadiz to Minorca, effectively relinquishing control of the strategic port city to

[7] Henry Wellesley to the Marquis of Wellesley, 9 and 10 March 1810, nos 3 and 4 and enclosures, TNA: FO 72/92.
[8] 'Actas de la Junta Superior, 29 May 1810', quoted in Santos Oliver, *Mallorca durante la primera revolución, 1808-1814* (Palma: Luis Ripoll, 1982 [1901]), p. 327.
[9] Letter from Bardaxi to Henry Wellesley, 24 July 1810 [British Ambassador's translation copy], enclosure with Wellesley to Marquis of Wellesley, 31 July 1810, TNA: FO 72/96, no. 70.
[10] Letter from Henry Wellesley to Bardaxi, 26 July 1810, copy enclosed with Wellesley to Marquis of Wellesley, 31 July 1810, TNA: FO 72/96, no. 70.

the British. With that, Wellesley gave permission for the French prisoners to be transported to England.[11] After eleven days at sea, the convoys from Cabrera arrived in Gibraltar where senior French officers were treated to several days of lavish banquets and meals. Finally, on 21 August 1810, the prisoners were all transferred onto British transports and they set sail from Gibraltar carrying the remaining French prisoners of war to England, where they arrived into Portsmouth Harbour about a month later.

Prisoners of war in Britain

In Britain, responsibility for prisoners of war fell to the Transport Board, a department of the Admiralty. The Transport Board was composed of between five and seven Commissioners for Conducting His Majesty's Transport Service and for the Care and Custody of Prisoners of War. Under the direction of its secretary Alexander M'Leay, the Board's Office in London was staffed by clerks and accountants whose numbers grew in the course of the war from about 50 to 90.[12] Along with the Board's appointed agents at the prisoners of war depots and parole towns, they carried out the Board's policies, as directed or approved by their Right Honourable Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty, concerning the accommodation, guarding, feeding, clothing, exchanging, hospital provision, transfers, escapes, and innumerable other aspects of administering what in the course of the decade of war from 1803 became the tens of thousands of captives held in various parts of Britain.[13]

French prisoners of war in Britain were not a new phenomenon. Throughout the many wars of the eighteenth century, French prisoners had been held in Britain. While the Napoleonic Wars did not see the first mass internment

[11] Letter from Bardaxi to Henry Wellesley, 31 July 1810 [British Ambassador's translation copy], enclosure with Wellesley to Marquis of Wellesley, 6 August 1810, TNA: FO 72/96, no. 70.
[12] The Board's staff at 31 January 1807 included its secretary, several sectional chief clerks and their assistants, and two accountants and their assistants—a total of 49, which by 3 February 1813 had grown to 87. TNA: ADM 1/3750, fol. 440; ADM 1/3764, fols 78-85. See M.E. Condon, 'The Establishment of the Transport Board: A Subdivision of the Admiralty, 4 July 1794', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 58 (1972), 68-84.
[13] Condon, pp. 68-84.

of prisoners of war in Britain, it was by far the largest and longest of modern history up to that point. In 1761, during the Seven Years' War, Britain housed approximately 20,000 rank and file prisoners of war spread across depots in Portsmouth, Winchester, Plymouth, Sissinghurst, Deal, Bristol, Liverpool, Exeter, Bideford, Falmouth and Yarmouth.[14] During the Napoleonic Wars, however, the number reached unprecedented levels. By March 1810 there were 43,683 French prisoners of war in Britain, with the figure increasing to approximately 70,000 by 1814.[15] Francis Abell suggests that the aggregate total of prisoners of war held in Britain between 1803 and 1814 was somewhere closer to 122,000 in contrast to approximately 16,000 British prisoners of war held in France.[16]

With the mass influx of new prisoners from successful naval campaigns in the West Indies, the Transport Board in London came under increasing strain on logistics of where to house the new prisoners. Once transported to Britain, prisoners were divided into two groups based largely on existing British military hierarchies. Commissioned officers were usually registered at a depot and then released on parole. Upon giving a written undertaking not to attempt to escape, parole prisoners were then sent to specified towns and villages in certain parts of Britain including Alresford, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Bishops Waltham, Oldiham and Selkirk, to name a few.[17]

The rank and file were sent to land depots—in most instances, these consisted of old fortresses, disused eighteenth-century prisons or converted mills

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[14] National Maritime Museum, London (NMM): ADM F/21 Sick and Wounded to Admiralty, 28 May 1761.

[15] Statistics taken from Francis Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815: A Record of their Lives, their Romance and their Sufferings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 6.

[16] A list produced by the Transport Office dated 4 August 1812 reports a grand total of 49,629 prisoners in depots and hulks in Britain, see TNA: HO 42/126, folder 164B. Francis Abell estimates that between 1803 and 1814 over 122,440 prisoners arrived in Britain. See Abell, p. 6. Statistical data also available in Thomas J. Walker, *The Depot for Prisoners-of-War at Norman Cross, Huntingdonshire, 1796-1816* (London: Constable & Co., 1915); Michael Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 53.

[17] See Chapter 10 for a full discussion of the French prisoners of war on parole in Britain.

capable of housing large numbers of prisoners.[18] The overwhelming demand for housing prisoners of war can be seen in the Transport Board's decision to construct the first purpose-built prisoner camp at Norman Cross near Peterborough between 1796-97. Less fortunate prisoners, however, were housed on the crowded 'floating prisons', or *pontons,* left anchored in Portsmouth Harbour or at Chatham.[19] The prisoners recently transported from Spain were unloaded at Portsmouth in July and August 1810. Officers were registered at Forton Prison and then released on parole—the majority of these were paroled to Scotland (see chapter 10)—while the rank and file were sent to Portchester Castle on the north side of Portsmouth Harbour.

History of Portchester Castle

Describing Portchester Castle, one French prisoner of war recorded in his memoirs, 'Ce château est un carré parfait dont deux faces sont baignées par la mer. A l'un des angles est une tour carrée d'une grande élévation' ['the castle is a perfect square with two sides facing the sea. At one corner is a square tower of great height].[20] Archaeological evidence suggests that Portchester Castle, located in Portsmouth Harbour, was originally built as a Roman fortress between 285 and 290 AD.[21] In many ways the history of Portchester Castle reflects the fraught and complicated history of the Anglo-French relationship. For centuries the castle was used as a staging post for British invasions of France, and alternatively, as a defensive fortress against French invasions. After William of Normandy's conquest in 1066, the castle was passed to various overlords who

[18] Land prison depots in Britain included: Forton, Liverpool, Mill Prison, Stapleton, Portchester, Norman Cross, Dartmoor, Edinburgh, Esk Mills (1811 only), Greenlaw, Valleyfield and Perth. Of these listed, only three were purpose-built: Dartmoor, Norman Cross and Perth. See Paul Chamberlain, *Hell Upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain, 1793-1815* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2008), p. 81.
[19] There were up to sixteen prison ships or *pontons* in Portsmouth Harbour between 1803-1815. Data relating to the prison hulks can be found at TNA: ADM 103. For more information about *pontons* see Chamberlain, pp. 55-77.
[20] Quantin, II, p. 160.
[21] See Barry Cunliffe, 'Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume I: Roman', *Society of Antiquaries Research Report,* 32 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1975).

made frequent alterations.[22] When Henry II came to the throne in 1154, he took over the castle as a royal stronghold, which it remained throughout the Middle Ages.

The castle's location in Portsmouth Harbour meant that it continued to be important as a point of embarkation and return for English campaigns on the Continent. In the fourteenth century, Edward II garrisoned the castle against the fear of a French invasion and in 1415, Henry V prepared at Portchester Castle for the campaign against the French that culminated in his victory at Agincourt.[23] The castle was later chosen as the landing place for Henry VI's French bride, Margaret of Anjou, in 1445, and in 1603, Elizabeth I held court at Portchester Castle shortly before the eastern ranges of the inner bailey were completely remodelled by Sir Thomas Cornwallis, last constable of the castle.[24]

Portchester Castle was first used as a prison in 1665 when the castle housed about 500 prisoners from the Second Dutch War, and it was again pressed into service as a prison during all the major conflicts of the eighteenth century. After the Treaty of Paris in 1763 concluding the Seven Years' War, Portchester Castle was emptied of prisoners, and its medieval buildings were left to fall into ruin. With the onset of the French Revolution and subsequent wars with France, in 1794 work began again to fit it up for use as a prison. Thirteen new timber houses were erected in the fort enclosure to house 500 men each, with 1,000 more men held in the great tower and inner bailey buildings. The prison was garrisoned until the Peace of Amiens in 1802, when it reverted to a military store.[25] Finally, in the autumn of 1809, the Transport Board expected an influx of new prisoners of war from Spain and the West Indies, and made plans

[22] Barry Cunliffe, 'Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume III: Medieval, the Outer Bailey and its Defences', *Society of Antiquaries Research Report,* 34 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1977).
[23] Cunliffe, III, pp 786–87.
[24] Cunliffe, III.
[25] Barry Cunliffe, 'Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume V: Post Medieval 1609–1819', *Society of Antiquaries Research Report,* 52 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1994).

for Portchester Castle to be re-established as a depot for prisoners of war once again.[26]

Portchester Castle as a Prison

The logistics of administering foreign prisoners of war within Britain was complex. To manage these depots as prisons, the Transport Board appointed an agent to oversee the safety and administration, ensuring that prisons were adequately staffed, and maintaining the physical health of the prisoners.[27] On 10 January 1810, Captain Charles William Paterson was appointed 'agent for Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle'.[28] Guarding and policing Portchester Castle was conducted by a regiment of the newly-formed King's German Legion and the Inverness Regiment of Militia.[29] The King's German Legion was formed within months of the dissolution of the Electorate of Hanover after Napoleon's invasion in 1803. Many of the Hanoverian army escaped to England to fight for King George III, who was also the Elector of Hanover. The King's German

[26] See TNA: ADM 98/252; also see Chamberlain, pp. 30-31, and M.E. Condon, pp. 68-84.

[27] See Chamberlain, pp. 30-31, and M.E. Condon, pp. 68-84.

[28] Letter from TO to Captain Paterson, 10 January 1810, TNA: ADM/98/252. Captain Charles William Paterson (1756–1841) was a captain in the 69th regiment of the Royal Navy. Captain Paterson was born at Berwick in 1756. Around 1769 he joined the HMS Phœnix going out to the Guinea coast, with the broad pennant of his maternal uncle, Commodore George Anthony Tonyn. Later he served in the American War of Independence. In 1776 he served on the HMS Eagle, Lord Howe's flagship, on the coast of North America, and in 1777 was promoted by Howe to be lieutenant of the HMS Stromboli, from which he was moved the next year to the HMS Brune. In June 1779 he joined the Ardent, a 64-gun ship, which, on 17 August, was captured off Plymouth by the combined Franco-Spanish fleet. Throughout the 1780s and 90s he served in the West Indies. In 1800 he commanded HMS Montagu in the Channel, and in 1801–02 the San Fiorenzo. Finally, in 1810 he was placed in charge of the French prisoners of war in Portchester Castle, and in 1811–12 commanded the HMS Puissant guardship at Spithead.

[29] During the Napoleonic Wars, Scotland raised its first Militia. Men were drawn from the counties of Argyll, Dumbarton, Bute and Inverness to become the 1st North British (or Argyll) Regiment of Militia. The Inverness Militia was formed in 1802. Men were drawn from the counties of Inverness, Banff, Elgin and Nairn. The Regiment was commanded by Sir James Grant of Grant, Bart., Lord Lieutenant of Inverness-shire.The Inverness Militia was designated as the 10th Militia in March 1804. The regiment served on garrison duty throughout Great Britain during the Napoleonic wars and returned to Inverness from Portsmouth in 1814, only to be disbanded.

Legion was comprised of a mixed corps of infantry, cavalry and artillery and would go on to play a vital role in several Napoleonic campaigns.[30]

In 1804, the Artillery of the King's German Legion was sent to Portchester where they founded a school of instruction for officers and non-commissioned officers, established by Major Röttiger. In 1810, with a new influx of prisoners of war entering Britain, the *Inverness Journal* of 26 January 1810 states that, 'The Inverness Regiment of Militia is appointed to do duty jointly with the Artillery of the King's German Legion, over the French prisoners when they occupy Portchester Castle'.[31] Between January and July 1810, the Inverness Militia and the King's German Legion worked to prepare Portchester Castle to receive new prisoners.

In early May 1810, Captain Paterson had been advised that 4,000 prisoners would soon be sent to Portchester under his command.[32] The first prisoners began to arrive in early July and by the end of October, Paterson informed the Transport Office that Portchester Castle was at full capacity.[33] On 5 November, *The Times* reported that Portchester Castle had been 'completely filled' with upwards of 6,000 prisoners.[34] With limitations on space and resources, efforts were made by the Transport Board to effectively manage and control prison populations. Women and children under the age of eighteen were returned to France. On 1 October 1810, the Transport Board instructed Captain Paterson to 'give the women and children [...] notice to prepare to embark for France in a few days'.[35] Nevertheless, with the arrival of prisoners from Cadiz

[30] After formation and training the Legion returned to the European theatre of war to revenge the French invasion of their homeland but the Legion returned to Britain after their disastrous campaign against Napoleon in 1806/07 at Jena and Auerstadt and their units were redeployed around England and Ireland.
[31] *Inverness Journal*, 26 January 1810; See also Gabriele Eilert-Ebke and Hans Ebke, eds, *Journal der KGL—Artillerie, 1804-1808* (Borsdorf: Edition winterwork, 2014).
[32] Letter from TO to Captain Paterson, 9 May 1810, TNA: ADM/98/252.
[33] See correspondence TNA: ADM/98/252.
[34] 'Portchester Castle is completely filled with prisoners. Upward of 6,000 are at present in that fortress'. Reported in *The Times*, 5 November 1810.
[35] In the registers of prisoners at Portchester Castle, women were recorded and then immediately transported back to France. The age of conscription in Napoleonic France was 18, so it was assumed that anyone under this age would be a non-combatant. TNA: ADM/98/252.

and Cabrera, by the end of 1810 approximately 7,000 prisoners were housed within Portchester Castle.[36]

Upon arrival, prisoners were registered at Portchester Castle and were allocated a living quarter and supplied with 'hammock, *paillasse*, bolster, blanket, hat, jacket, waistcoat, trowsers [sic], shirt, shoes, stockings and handkerchiefs'.[37] Daily routines were established to maintain control. The daily life of the French prisoners began with a headcount at 5:00 in the summer and at 6:30 in the winter months. Afterwards, prisoners were free to return to their rooms to clean, or walk around the grounds inside the castle walls.[38] Prisoners were also given the opportunity to correspond with family and friends back in France. This provided an opportunity for prisoners to access news and events in France and elsewhere. They could learn of the triumphs and failures of Napoleon's *Grande Armée*. They could also, vitally, keep their fingers on the pulse of cultural developments and tastes in Paris while being held captive many miles away across the English Channel.

Théâtre des Variétés

A playbill from Friday, 21 September 1810 announces the first production by 'Les Comédiens société du Théâtre des Variétés de Portchester Castle'.[39] Within just eight weeks of their arrival, on 21 September 1810, the prisoners formed a theatrical society, or *société*, built a fully functioning theatre and organised a performance of René-Guilbert Pixérécourt's melodrama, *Cœlina, or L'Enfant du mystère*.[40] The playbills indicate that there were normally two performances each week from September 1810 to January 1811. The playbills also indicate the

[36] This figure is taken from the register of prisoners at Portchester Castle, TNA: ADM 103/334.
[37] A register of supplies issued to each prisoner at Portchester Castle is listed at TNA: ADM 103/334.
[38] Gille illustrates the daily routines at Portchester Castle. Gille, p. 263.
[39] Playbills, THM/415/2/1.
[40] The playbills at the V&A archive indicate that the first performance took place on 21 September 1810; see V&A: THM/415/2.

prisoners were performing a variety of three-act melodramas interspersed with shorter one-act vaudevilles and musical interludes.

Les Comédiens société

The talents found at Portchester Castle were immense and wide-ranging. Quantin tells us that the theatre at Portchester Castle was run by an organised theatre *société,* employing approximately sixty-six *sociétaires*.[41] From among the prisoner population, the *société* found approximately 18 actors along with an orchestra of twelve musicians including violins, clarinettes, flutes, horns, and drums. In addition to the orchestra, the *société* employed six dancers and twenty *figurans* [extras]. The theatre also required considerable technical talent as well including a *machiniste* [machinist], *menuisier* [carpenter], *commissionnaire interprète et receveur de marques* [interpreter/translator, ticket taker], a *perruquier* [wigmaker] and a *lampiste* [lamplighter].[42]

Actors

The actors at Portchester Castle were each assigned particular roles that suited their talent and appearance such as *tyran* [tyrant/villain], *premier role* [lead male role], *première rôle en femme* [lead role as female], *père noble* [older male], *comique* [comic], *les mères* [older female], and *jeune première* [young woman].[43] Guillaume Breton was a 31-year-old sergeant in the 2nd Regiment of the Garde de Paris. As one of the older *sociétaires*, Breton appears to have been one of the stronger comic performers and also took the role of *régisseur* (equivalent to a director/stage manager) and *premier comique*. Quantin hints that Breton had previous acting experience in Paris, and this perhaps gave him the authority to be director/stage manager. As *premier comique*, Breton would have played roles like Figaro in *Le Barbier de Séville*. He also played Mathurin in the prisoners'

[41] See Quantin's list in Appendix B.
[42] See Appendix for full list.
[43] Quantin provides a useful list of *sociétaires* included in Appendix B. See Quantin, II, p. 149.

own vaudeville, *La Fête du Protecteur* and Darmont in *Les Etrennes du Coeur* [*The Heart's New Year Gift*].[44]

The lead male role appears to have been reserved for Jean-Baptiste Lafontaine, a 21-year-old sergeant in the Garde de Paris who had previously worked as an actor on the Paris stage as a *jeune premier* at the Théâtre des Troubadours in Paris.[45] Lafontaine became one of the leading stars at Portchester Castle. In addition to acting, he also co-wrote a three-act melodrama, *Roséliska, ou amour, haine et vengeance*, in which he took the lead male role of Stanislas as well as playing Adolphe in *La Fête du Protecteur* and Blainval in *Les Etrennes du Coeur*.[46]

Aside from Breton and Lafontaine, the actors at Portchester Castle also included Jacques Belin, a 29-year-old sergeant in the marine artillery corps. Belin played the role of *tyran,* cast in villainous roles such as Polowitz in *Roséliska* or Truguelin in Pixérécourt's *Cœlina*. Additional actors included Jean-Antoine Gabriel Paullel who served as both stage manager and *bas comique* playing roles such as the bumbling valet Walko in *Roséliska*. Pierre-César Reverdy, a 28-year-old seargant in the Garde de Paris played the *père noble* such as the nobleman Polinksi in *Roséliska*. Quantin also lists a group of 'amateurs' including himself, Louis Gille and Bernard-Louis Bancelin as additional *jeunes premiers*.

Musicians:

Music was an important part of the repertoire at Portchester Castle. An orchestra and dance troupe opens up the possibility that the prisoners could incorporate music and ballet into their performances. Indeed, most of the genres performed such as vaudeville and melodrama incorporate music into their dramatic action.

[44] Script for *La Fête du Protecteur* at THM/415 /1/2 and *The Heart's New Year Gift* at THM/415/1/7.
[45] Quantin, II, p. 149.
[46] Script for *La Fête du Protecteur* at THM/415 /1/2 and *The Heart's New Year Gift* at THM/415/1/7.

Quantin notes that there was an orchestra of twelve musicians at Portchester Castle.[47] The *chef d'orchestre* was Marc-Antoine Corret, a horn player from Paris who had trained at the Conservatoire.[48] Quantin tells us that Corret composed new scores for opéra-comiques, *Les Deux Journées* (1800), *Pierre-le-Grand* (1790), and *Françoise de Foix* (1809).[49] The playbills also highlight that Corret composed new music for *Les Chevaliers du lion* [*The Knights of the Lion,* 1804] a three-act melodrama performed on 10th December 1810.[50]

Corret's orchestra comprised four violins, four clarinettes, two flutes, and a *cor/timbale*. Joseph Gourde as *premier violon*, Louis as *première clarinette*, Cuveli as *première flute*, and Bodard on *cor* and *timbale*. Along with the musicians, Quantin also highlights that there were six dancers led by Joseph Thenard.[51] Having a full orchestra and dancers meant that the prisoners could perform more spectacular entertainments such as melodrama, which required both music and dance.

'Les Reines' ['The Queens']

All female prisoners were immediately repatriated to France, so the Portchester Castle theatricals were comprised of an all-male cast. Female roles were played by Hippolyte Sutat, André Gruentgenz and Jean-François Wauthier.[52] Sutat played the leading female roles including the title role of *Roséliska*. Sutat was joined by André Gruentgenz, a 23-year-old sergent in the First Regiment of the Garde de Paris. Described as stout, and standing at 5 foot 6 inches, Gruentgenz played *les meres,* comic female roles, particularly those of older women, or, such as Fresca, a lady's maid in *Roséliska*. As one of *les mères,* Gruentgenz likely played one of the crude and abusive fishwives in *Le Galant Savetier* [*The Gallant Cobbler*]. Alongside Sutat and Gruentgenz, was Jean-François Wauthier

[47] Quantin, II, p. 153.
[48] AN Paris : AJ 37/85, pp. 299, 367. Records indicate that Corret enrolled at the conservatoire on 16 Floréal, an 8 [6 May1800].
[49] Quantin, II, p. 148.
[50] V&A: THM /415/2/18.
[51] Quantin, II, p. 153.
[52] Quantin, II, p. p. 152.

who played the *soubrettes*.[53] A young 22-year-old with a small build, blond hair and grey eyes, Wauthier was cast in roles such as Justine in *La Fête du Protecteur* or Juliette in *Les Etrennes du Cœur* [*The Heart's New Year Gift*].[54] As a *soubrette*, Wauthier would invariably have played famous roles such as the feisty and quick-witted Suzanne in Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1784).

Although the *société* appears to have been quickly formed, it was not altogether without its daily complications and fraught working relationships. There were plenty of strong-willed, stubborn personalities. Tempers occasionally flared, jealousies were aroused. The *société* faced many complications involved in running a successful amateur theatrical troupe including the selection of appropriate plays to perform, as well as ensuring a fair and even distribution of roles amongst the actors.

Quantin recalls how certain actors fought over particular roles that they wanted to play. 'Il fallait se disputer long-temps avant d'être d'accord sur la distribution des rôles' ['They were forced to quarrel for a long time before agreeing on the distribution of roles'].[55] Most of the trouble appears have been with the actors playing the female parts, actors that Quantin tellingly refers to as 'les reines' ['the queens']. In one instance he recalls that Sutat, the *premier rôle en femme* wanted to play the role of 'la soubrette' normally played by Wauthier who 'criait à l'usurpation' ['cried out against the usurpation'].[56] The two actors fought over the disputed role to the extent that the play itself was eventually cancelled.

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[53] Soubrette, in theatre, comic female character usually in the role of a chambermaid. The soubrette role originated in French comedy, one of the best examples being Suzanne in Pierre-Augustin de Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1784). Still earlier, Molière's plays *Tartuffe* (1664) and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670) contained versions of the character in the roles of Dorine and Nicole.
Most often of an independent nature, the soubrette demonstrated a nonconformist attitude coupled with a down-to-earth approach and native humour. Quick-witted and subtle, as in the character Lisette in Pierre Marivaux's *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* (*The Game of Love and Chance*, 1730), the soubrette developed greater popularity and recognition in comic opera and the operetta. During this period in the 18th century she became fixed as a type. The most successful soubrettes coupled the personality traits of Molière's characters with a certain ingenuous charm. See Richard Boldrey, *Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias* (Caldwell Publishing, 1994).
[54] V&A: THM/415/1/7; See Quantin, pp. 149-151.
[55] Quantin, II, p. 144.
[56] Quantin, II, p. 144.

Fighting over roles was not the only thing that caused Sutat to lose his temper. Having suitable costumes appears to have been another sore point amongst the actors. Sutat, 'protestait sur son honneur qu'elle ne jouerait point dans la pièce proposée si la société ne faisait point pour lui la dépense d'une robe' ['protested on her honour that she would not perform in the proposed play if the society did not buy for her a new dress]. However, according to Quantin, the *société* 'reprochait aux dames de n'être point raisonnables, que leur coquetterie était sans bornes, et que les frais de leur toilette étaient excessifs' ['reproached the ladies for not being reasonable, saying that that their coquetry was limitless, and that the expense of their dress was excessive']. Sutat wanted better costumes, but the *société* had limited funds. Once Sutat's demands became known, suddenly all the actors wanted newer and improved costumes. The actor playing *le tyran*, Jacques Belin, 'qui avait jusqu'à ce moment gardé noble et dédaigneux silence, assurait que, puisque les reines voulaient une robe, lui, il voulait un costume complet' ['who had up to that time kept a noble and disdainful silence, asserted that, since the queens wanted a dress, he wanted a complete suit'] [57] We can only assume that other actors followed suit, and soon the *société* found itself financially burdened.

The theatre *société* certainly had its hands full. The organisation and efficiency, the pace and the scale of these theatricals demonstrates the vital role that theatre played in the lives of these prisoners. Furthermore, it highlights a remarkable degree of agency on behalf of the prisoners to fight the mental struggles brought on by captivity by bringing their fellow countrymen together in a creative, collegial fashion for an afternoon of entertainment to the benefit of the collective.

One of the truly remarkable and distinguishing features of the Portchester Castle theatricals, however, was its advanced stage machinery and effects far surpassing the capabilities of the Isla de Leon or Cabrera. Both Quantin and Gille have highlighted these effects, which included 'changemens à vue, démolitions, apparitions, danses, combats' ['changes in view, demolitions, apparitions,

[57] Quantin, II, p. 144. It should noted that Quantin uses the feminine 'elle' referring to Sutat.

dances, combats'] as well as, on at least one occasion, a complex dream sequence, which we will explore in more depth later in this chapter.[58] The overall success of the theatre – its ability to perform a wide range of *grands spectacles* and entertain up to 300 people, two evenings per week for four years — was owed mostly to its designer and chief architect, Jean François de Carré, a former *machiniste* of the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique in Paris.

Jean-François Dominique de Carré

Memoirists are not shy in lavishing praise on Jean-François Dominique de Carré. Quantin writes that Carré 'en avait dirigé tous les travaux avec un art et une adresse qui triomphèrent de tous les obtacles' ['had directed all this work with a skill and capacity that triumphed over all obstacles'], while Gille suggests that, 'C'est à [Carré] que le théâtre de Portchester dut par la suite, la plus grande partie de sa célébrité' ['it is to Carré that Portchester theatre owed the greater part of its celebrity'].[59] Jean-François de Carré was a 23-year-old soldier who had marched to Andalusia with Dupont's forces and was captured at Cordoba on 19 July 1808. Carré was not transported to Cabrera, but remained imprisoned on the hulks in Cadiz through 1809-10, and was one of the first group of prisoners of war sent to England by Wellesley in April 1810.[60]

Before conscription in 1807, Carré worked as a *machiniste* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, one of the four *grands théâtres* authorised to operate in Paris under Napoleon's 1807 decree.[61] The Opéra Comique had a long and dynamic history dating back to the seventeenth-century fair theatricals of *comédie-italienne* troupes performing in Paris. In 1762, the Théâtre-Italienne was merged with rival troupe to form the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique. On 26 July 1801, the Opéra-Comique merged with rival Théâtre Feydeau, which performed at both the salle Favart, and the Théâtre Feydeau.

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[58] Quantin, II, p. 136.
[59] Gille, p. 267.
[60] See Portchester Castle Register at TNA: PRO ADM 103/336; dossier 'Jean François Dominique de Carré' at SHD, Paris. Also see Carré's contract at AN: AJ13, 1059 III (contrats 15-16).
[61] For the repertoire of the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique was dictated in Napoleon's 1807 decree see Nicole Wild, *Dictionnaire des théâtres parisiens au XIXe siècle: les théâtres et la musique* (Paris, 1989), pp. 324-36.

The role of the *machiniste* in a French theatre was a complex and dynamic one in the early nineteenth century. Carré was responsible for overseeing all technical elements of the stage at the Opéra-Comique. According to M. J. Moynet, writing in 1873, a theatre's *machiniste* was at once 'menuisier, ébéniste, mécanicien' [carpenter, cabinet-maker, mechanic'].[62] Furthermore he notes that 'L'étude du dessin, de la dynamique, lui est indispensable. La physique, la chimie, même lui fournissent des effets' ['The study of drawing and dynamics are indispensible. Even physics and chemistry give good effects'].[63] At the Opéra-Comique, Carré would have worked with a diverse repertoire of plays. It is certainly worth noting that the Opéra-Comique had 'un répertoire très vaste car non seulement il est ouvert tous les jours, mais il affiche deux ou trois œuvres par soirée avec alternance de pièces anciennes et nouvelles' ['a vast repertoire not only because it is open every day, but it performs two or three plays per evening, alternating old and new works'].[64] In addition to performing every day in Paris, as a *grand théâtre* in the capital, the Opéra-Comique had considerably advanced stage machinery.[65] Carré would have an intimate knowledge of the technical workings of a Parisian *grand théâtre* and no doubt he attempted to replicate this at Portchester Castle.

Although the space at Portchester Castle was much reduced from that of the Opéra-Comique, and he had limited resources, Carré was able to produce a theatre that was, according to Quantin, 'aussi bien machiné que ceux de la capitale' ['as well-equipped as those in the capital'].[66] Upon arrival at Portchester Castle, Carré lost no time in designing a stage, an auditorium decorated in 'un nouveau goût' [a new style],[67] along with the intricate creation of theatre

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[62] M. J. Moynet, *L'Envers du théâtre: machines et décorations* (Paris: Hachette, 1873), p. 128.
[63] Moynet, p. 128.
[64] Olivier Bara, *Le Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique sous la Restauration: Enquête autour d'un genre moyen* (Paris : Hildensheim, 2001), p. 61.
[65] See Nicole Wild, 'La Mise en scène à l'Opéra-Comique sous la Restauration' in *Die Opera comique und ihr Einfluss auf das europaische Musiktheater,* ed. Herbert Schneider and Nicole Wild (Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 1997).
[66] Quantin, II, p. 136.
[67] Gille, p. 269.

machinery and equipment that enabled more challenging stage effects surpassing the limited resources available to the prisoners on the Isla de Leon or Cabrera.

Salle de Spectacle: Design and architecture

Our understanding of the theatre at Portchester Castle relies exclusively on the descriptions provided in the prisoners' memoirs along with one recently discovered print of a fencing competition possibly depicting the stage and proscenium arch (see fig. 11). Having spent nearly fifteen months from April 1809 to July 1810 on a desolate island of Cabrera, performing in the dampness of a cistern, Portchester Castle with its sheltered Keep must have seemed an almost luxurious upgrade to the prisoners.

Reformulating the layout of the original prisoner of war theatre is left to informed speculation, and dramaturgical analysis of the texts and archive materials. The approved site for the theatre was the ground floor basement of the old Castle Keep, which had remained unused as a result of its dampness, making it unsuitable for housing prisoners.[68] The ground-floor of the Keep is divided into two rooms of similar size. Gille writes that 'le théâtre occupait tout le rez-de-chaussée de la grande tour,' ['the theatre occupied the entire ground-floor of the great tower'].[69] The main room served as the *salle de spectacle* while the other served 'de foyer et de logement aux personnes attachées au théâtre' ['a room and lodging for prisoners attached to the theatre'].[70] Gille's description aligns with the layout of the Castle Keep and suggests that the stage would have been at the north-end of the main entrance room, with the stairs being used for entrances and exits while the second room was effectively used as a Green Room for the actors and musicians.

Within the auditorium, Gille notes that Carré installed 'un rang de loges' ['a row of boxes'] so that the theatre could hold between 250 and 300 people at a

[68] Gille mentions that 'l'agent s'était refusé d'y laisser loger des prisonniers, attendu que tous ceux qu'on avait mis dans ces deux salles pendant la guerre précédente y avaient contracté des maladies qui leur avaient causé la mort'. Gille, p. 267.
[69] Gille, p. 280.
[70] Gille, p. 280.

time.[71] The private boxes were created for distinguished British visitors, such as Captain Paterson, local militia, and civilians, as well as *sociétaires,* while the rest of the French prisoners were in the 'parterre', or the pit, on the main floor. It is unclear whether this 'rang de loges' was elevated as a tiered balcony above the auditorium, or whether it was simply a row of boxes sectioned from the parterre. However, Gille seems to suggest that the boxes were elevated in order that the auditorium could accommodate more people. In addition, the script for *Les Etrennes du Cœur* [*The Heart's New Year Gift*] gives instructions for a cupid is sent from the stage up to an elevated box.[72] An elevated 'rang de loges' would have allowed more prisoners on the *parterre*.[73]

There would also need to be room in the theatre for a six-piece orchestra. In most theatres of the period—at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, for example—the orchestra sit in front of the stage. While Cunliffe's excavations of the keep are unclear if there was an earth or stone floor, most Norman keeps in England have earth floors. In this instance the prisoners might have dug out a trench for the orchestra with a raised stage. We must assume that in order to fit upwards of 300 people into the space, the audience would have been standing in a densely packed *parterre*. In order to see the stage it would seem likely that it might have been raised at least two metres above floor-level.

When it came to designing the interior of the theatre's auditorium, Gille also notes that Carré decorated the *loges,* or boxes, in 'un nouveau goût', however, his description falls short of actually describing the interior of the theatre. Having been a *machiniste* at the Opéra-Comique, it is possible that Carré would have adopted some of its design features in his own plans for the theatre at Portchester Castle. In 1801, the Opéra-Comique merged with the Théâtre Feydeau and occupied the Salle Feydeau, which in that same year had undergone a redesign in a Neo-Classical style.[74] A print depicting a fencing match at

[71] Gille, p. 267.
[72] V&A: THM/415/1/7.
[73] The Comédie-Française in Paris had seating in the parterre in 1783 and by the early 1800s, most theatres offered seating in the *parterre*.
[74] See Janet Johnson, 'The Théâtre Feydeau', *Sadie*, 3 (1992), p. 870; also Raphaelle Legrand and Patrick Taïeb, 'L'Opéra-Comique sous le Consulat et l'Empire' in *Le Théâtre lyrique en France au XIXe siècle,* ed. Paul Prévost (Metz: Serpenoise, 1995),

Portchester Castle may in fact reveal that the proscenium front was decorated in a similar neo-classical style (see fig. 11). There are also some faint traces of painting on the ceiling beams that may give some indication of the interior design of the theatre.

Once the theatre was opened and began to generate an income from ticket sales, Carré was able to add new visual effects to enhance the Portchester Castle theatre. The theatre was shut down temporarily between January and March 1811. Carré reopened the theatre in March 1811 with an elaborately painted drop curtain painted with famous *souvenirs* and iconic views of Paris. Gille provides a vivid depiction of the scene painted on the curtain (see fig. 12):

> [V]ue prise d'une des maisons du coin de la Place Dauphine sur le Pont-Neuf; un côté du trottoir de milieu duquel remarquait le café Paris ; [...] le pont des Arts, le pont Royal, celui de la Concorde et la barrière des Bonshommes se voyaient dans la perspective; à droite et à gauche figuraient la superbe colonnade du Louvre, le palais et la terrasse des Tuileries sur lequel flottait le pavillon national, l'Hôtel des Monnaies, les Quatre-Nations, les théâtres et les principaux hôtels du quai Voltaire.[75]
>
> [View from one of the houses at the corner of the Place Dauphine towards the Pont-Neuf; one side of the sidewalk of this bridge, in the middle of which you can see the café Paris; [...] the Pont des Arts, the Pont Royal, that of the Concorde and the Barrière des Bonshommes were shown in perspective; to the right and left could be seen the superb colonnade of the Louvre, the palace and terrace of the Tuileries over which flew the national flag, the Hôtel des Monnaies, the Quatre-Nations, the Theatin [convent] and the main hotels of the quai Voltaire.]

The view is painted from the Place Dauphine on the Île de Cité in the heart of Paris. Not only does this vantage point provide a prime view of Parisian

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pp. 1-61; also Olivier Bara, *Le Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique sous la Restauration: Enquête autour d'un genre moyen* (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2001).
[75] Gille, p. 269.

landmarks, it is situated close the cathedral of Notre Dame where Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor just a few years earlier.[76] Designing the curtain with iconic, easily recognizable views of Paris was very deliberate. Gille remarks that the views 'leur rappelait les plus doux souvenirs' ['reminded them of their fondest memories'].[77] The curtain served as a sentimental reminder of 'home'. Theatre served as a place to reconnect with that past, and in this instance, the prisoners achieved it with the landmarks of Paris visibly displayed.

The representation of Parisian landmarks may have had other implications as well. Whether consciously or not, in displaying iconic views of Paris, Carré was effectively asserting French dominion over the theatre. Coupled with the selection of French repertoire, as we shall see later in the chapter, the *souvenirs* of Paris combined to secure the memory of home, and of French cultural identity. Both visually and textually, the theatre at Portchester Castle constituted a microcosm of Paris on the south coast of England.

Theatre Machinery

In terms of the stage and its mechanical elements, the texts performed at Portchester Castle provide revealing clues about the space. Gille points to one play, *Le Petit Poucet, ou L'Orphelin de la forêt* (1798), a *féerie* pièce by Cuvelier de Trie and Hapdé. Based on a fairy tale by French author Charles Perrault (1628-1703), the play focuses on *Le Petit Poucet*, an orphan who sets out in search of his mother, Rosaure, who has been kidnapped and imprisoned in the castle of a cruel magician, Barbastal, who has murdered her husband and utters dire threats to her if she will not marry him. The setting of the play transitions through a range of locations including a peasant's cottage, a tyrant's castle, a forest, a cave, and a crypt. The most spectacular scenic effects come in the last act when the dark crypt is transformed into :

> 'une arène entourée de colonnades; le fond représente un amphithéâtre soutenu par des colonnes; au milieu de l'amphithéâtre s'élève un dôme en

[76] One of the plays listed in the playbills was *Delindrin,* which is set on the Pont-Neuf in Paris.
[77] Gille, p. 269.

marbre blanc; sur lequel est placé le siège de Barbastal. Au-dessous, sont des loges fermées par des barreaux au travers desquels ou apperçoit des bêtes féroces. Au milieu de la scène un poteau garni de chaînes, à droite et à gauche des barrières de fer ferment l'enceinte'.[78]

[An arena surrounded by colonnades; the rear of the stage represents an amphitheater supported by columns; in the middle of the amphitheater stands a dome of white marble; on which the seat of Barbastal is placed. Below, are boxes closed by bars through which ferocious beasts can be perceived. In the middle of the stage a stake hung with chains, on the right and left iron barriers seal the enclosure].

At the release of the tigers a flame rises up and drives them back then Barbastal leaps into the arena with a dagger to complete his work, but is stopped by a fairy who descends onto the stage on a cloud. The fairy warns the people to leave as the building is about to collapse and gives a prize to Poucet and his mother for filial affection. The conclusion of *Le Petit Poucet* is pure *grand spectacle* at its finest as the stage directions illustrate in the final apotheosis scene:

Les tigres se précipitent sur Barbastal; la foudre tombe; la terre s'ouvre; ils sont engloutis avec le tyran dont ils déchirent le sein; alors les murs et colonnes de l'arene s'écroulent avec un bruit effrayant au milieu d'une pluie de feu; Rosaure et son fils montent dans le char de la Fée, et s'élancent avec elle dans les airs.[79]

[The tigers hurl themselves upon Barbastal; lightning strikes; the earth opens; the tigers are swallowed up with the tyrant whose breast they tear; then the walls and columns of the arena collapse with a frightful noise in

[78] Cuvelier and Hapdé, *Le Petit Poucet, ou, L'Orphelin de la forêt* (1802), v. 5.
[79] *Le Petit Poucet*, v. 9.

the midst of a rain of fire; Rosaure and her son climb into the Fairy's chariot, and soar with her into the air.]

If the prisoners successfully adhered to the original stage directions for *Le Petit Poucet,* as Gille suggests they did, it demonstrates not only Carré's ingenuity, but also the ambitions of the theatrical society to create the most spectacular effects possible. But how exactly would they have staged it? The various scene changes could have been made in a number of ways, either through fly curtains. Tigers could easily have been made by *figurans* in costume or even through the use of puppets operated from above or in the wings.

More complicated stage effects, however, include Barbastal's exit. The direction that 'la terre s'ouvre' would suggest that there was a trapdoor under the stage for Barbastal to exit through. In order to have a trapdoor, the stage would need to be elevated to at least one meter, if not more, to allow the actor to disappear effectively, and then escape under the stage. Perhaps an even more complicated staging issue is the entrance and exit of the fairy on a cloud. To raise and lower the actor onto the stage would have required a fly rigging system above the stage and a system of pulleys in the wings operated by stagehands. For the entrance, the fairy descends onto the stage alone, but exits with two more actors on the cloud. Once again, fly systems were common in theatre throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but it was a dangerous operation. The successful operation of a fly system at Portchester would have relied strongly on Carré's skills as a professional *machiniste*, on countless rehearsals, not to mention a great deal of trust on behalf of the actors being hoisted over the stage.

Of all the grand effects in final scene of *Le Petit Poucet,* there are serious doubts as to whether pyrotechnics were used in the theatre at Portchester Castle. Certainly pyrotechnics were a part of popular theatre and opera, yet 'une pluie de feu' might be somewhat difficult to incorporate into such a crowded space, considering as well that the stage and its machinery was made of wood. It seems highly unlikely that Carré would have opted to use pyrotechnics in his newly built theatre. Certainly the effects of 'une pluie de feu' could have been produced through sound and light backstage.

Further details about the theatre's layout and mechanical structures can be gleaned from a short play written by the prisoners, which survives in the V&A. In January 1811, shortly before Captain Paterson was reassigned to ship duties, the prisoners wrote and performed a short play in his honour entitled, *Les Etrennes du Coeur* [*The Heart's New Year Gift*].[80] The play celebrates the prisoners' gratitude to Paterson, but the stage directions are quite revealing. At one stage the script directs that 'from under the stage' a banner is raised with the words 'Long live Paterson'.[81] These directions tell us that the stage was in fact raised. Furthermore, in the final scene of the play, a cupid 'crosses the house and flies to the box' where Paterson is sitting and delivers a hand-written note of thanks. This small detail is revealing. First of all, in order for the cupid to fly, a system of ropes and pulleys had to be in place, which gives us a good indication of the materials that Carré might have had at his disposal. These ropes and pulleys could have easily been anchored and screwed into the wood beams around the room and used for similar spectacle in other plays. Secondly, the fact that the cupid 'flies' to deliver his message suggests that Paterson was sitting in an elevated box above the parterre, and that this elevated box was located at the back of the house.

Carré's technical ingenuity and skill was considerable, and he did not shy away from creating the grandest of *grand spectacle*. Quantin praises Carré's staging as being executed with 'un zèle infatigable' ['an indefatigable zeal'].[82] Indeed we will see in the conclusion that Carré later returns to work as a *machiniste en chef* at the Opéra Comique. In 1818, the theatre's governing board of *sociétaires* chastised Carré, along with the stage designers, for their somewhat overzealous production of *Le Petit Poucet* that ran over budget.[83] With this in mind, it might be safe to assume that Carré took every opportunity to stretch the technical limits of the Portchester Castle theatre, whenever possible.

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[80] *Les Etrennes du cœur* (French version) at V&A: THM/415/1/1 and *The Heart's New Year Gift* (English version) at V&A: THM/415/1/7.
[81] See stage directions in *The Heart's New Year Gift*, see V&A: THM/415/1/7.
[82] Quantin, II, p. 136.
[83] Registre, OC 132, Comité du 11 décembre 1819, AN: AJ13.

Material Conditions:

Being an amateur theatre with limited income and limited access to raw materials, the conditions of the Portchester Castle theatre were somewhat rudimentary, although no doubt a considerable upgrade from Cabrera. Scenery, lighting and costumes would have been less robust than what Carré was accustomed to at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Nevertheless, all evidence suggests that he utilized the available materials with 'un zèle infatigable' ['an indefatigable zeal'].[84]

The playbills also indicate that the prisoners were performing at 'twelve o'clock precisely'. Even though they were performing during daylight hours, the Norman keep has only three narrow windows and may still have been quite dark. Quantin tells us that a prisoner named Monté was a *lampiste* at the theatre, which suggests that the prisoners used lighting in the theatre. A letter from the Transport Board on 3 April 1810 shows that Captain Paterson had ordered 'Two Hogheads of Lamp Oil'.[85] Presumably the lamp oil was used to light the hospital and guards' quarters, but suggests that prisoners may also have had access to oil lamps. On 5 October, shortly after the prisoners' first recorded performance, a letter from the Transport Board confirms that Paterson has ordered: 3lbs of twine, 1 ream of common paper, 2 lbs of pins, 1 lb of thread, and 200 yard of bunting from the dock yard.[86]

These materials were no doubt intended for the administration of Portchester Castle. However, they are also materials that could have been used to support the theatricals. Paper was essential for copying down the plays that were being performed. Twine, pins and thread were all materials that could be used to make costumes, scenery and props for the theatre. For instance, we know that the prisoners ultimately use bunting in a performance of *La Féte du Protecteur*.

On 10 August 1810, the Transport Board wrote to Captain Paterson giving him permission to attend 'the approaching sale of old timber to procure the necessary quantity of plank required for the purpose thereinmentioned'.[87]

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[84] Quantin, II, p. 136.
[85] Letter from TO to Captain Paterson, 3 April 1810, TNA: ADM 298.
[86] Letter from TO to Captain Paterson, 5 October 1810, TNA: ADM 298.
[87] Letter from TO to Captain Paterson, 10 August 1810, TNA: ADM 298.

Gille writes that Paterson 'avait en outre fourni une très grande quantité de bois pour servir à la construction du théâtre' ['had in addition furnished us with a great quantity of wood with which to construct the stage'].[88] Having arrived in June 1810, it is possible that the 'old timber' purchased by Captain Paterson was given to Carré in August 1810 to begin construction of the theatre in the basement of the castle's keep.

Aside from wood to create the physical stage, we also know that there was a daily market outside the prison gate where the prisoners could obtain materials such as cloth for making costumes and props. Male prisoners performing male roles may have been able to make simple alterations to their prison outfits. However, the female roles would have required costumes such as dresses to make them distinguishable. Quantin reveals that the French actors were particularly desirous to impress the English ladies at their performances and to see who 'brillerait le plus dans ses costumes' ['would shine most in his costume'].[89] Exactly what kind of costumes the prisoners wore is a matter of speculation.

Repertoire

'Les ouvrages les plus nouveaux et les plus en vogue'

Having worked as *machiniste* at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique meant that Jean-François Carré had connections to one of four *grands théâtres* operating in Paris. These connections paid off for the theatre society at Portchester Castle. According to Gille, Carré had reportedly established a line of communication with the director of the *sociétaires* of the Opéra-Comique, Monsieur Lesage, who provided the prisoners with 'les ouvrages les plus nouveaux et les plus en vogue' ['the newest and most fashionable plays'].[90] Quantin corroborates Gille in saying, 'Nous avions souvent cet avantage de jouer les pièces nouvelles à un très-court intervalle de leur première représentation à Paris' ['We often had the advantage of performing new plays shortly after their premieres in Paris']. Quantin suggests that within fifteen days 'après sa première apparition sur un théâtre de la capitale,

[88] Gille, pp. 266-67.
[89] Quantin, II, p. 137.
[90] Gille, p. 270.

souvent une pièce était représentée sur le nôtre' ['after its first appearance on a Paris stage, it was performed on ours'].[91]

Gille's assertion is supported by Quantin's lists of repertoire which includes opéra-comiques like Montan-Berton's *Françoise de Foix* written in 1809 and Etienne's *Les Deux gendres* which opened on 11 August 1810. Both of these plays premiered after the prisoners had already left Paris, so there is no way they would have been able to see them first. In addition to these two opéra comiques, Quantin lists two vaudevilles, *Le Piége* (1812) and *Le Château d'If* (1813), which would not have seen before the prisoners left Paris. The director of the *sociétaires* of the theatre, Monsieur Lesage, could have procured plays from other theatres to send to the prisoners at Portchester Castle. Effectively this means that the prisoners at Portchester Castle were performing plays 'hot off the press' from Paris. Precisely when the connection was made with Paris is unclear, but we do know that the prisoners were performing plays at Portchester Castle that were also highly successful hits on the stage in Paris at approximately the same time.

A playbill refers to the prisoners' theatre as the Théâtre des Variétés, an apt and revealing description of the theatrical milieu and repertoire at Portchester Castle, suggesting an imitation of a new theatre by the same name in Paris, opened in the year 1807. The Théâtre des Variétés was created in Paris by the theatre director and impresario, Mademoiselle Montansier, when her own theatre troupe was evicted from the Théâtre du Palais-Royal the previous year. Under Napoleon's decree of 1807, the Théâtre des Variétés was established as one of four secondary theatres.[92]

The repertoire of plays performed by the French prisoners of war at Portchester Castle stands in contrast to that of the Isla de Leon and Cabrera for its diverse array of genres including drama, melodrama, opéra-comique, tragedy, high comedy and vaudeville. At Portchester Castle, a new world of theatrical possibilities opened to the prisoners. With the talents and ingenuity of a professional *machiniste* along with the good-will and kindness of the prison

[91] Quantin, II, p. 146.
[92] Wild, *Dictionnaire des théâtres,* pp. 14, 412-20.

agent, Captain Paterson, supplying raw materials, the prisoners had the capability to stage complex *grand spectacle*, complete with an orchestra and dancers. Unlike Mademoiselle Montansier's troupe, the Théâtre des Variétés at Portchester Castle was not guided by the dictates of Napoleon's decree in their selection of repertoire, and were free to choose what plays they wished to perform. The *société* opted for a wide variety of genres, encompassing both popular boulevard theatre alongside more genteel, highbrow genres, and a variety of old and new plays.

Between 21 September 1810 and 5 January 1811, there are a total of 48 performances at Portchester Castle, which break down as: 35 performances of vaudeville (73%), 9 performances of melodrama (19%), 2 of comedy (4%), and 2 of one-act tragedy (4%). The prisoners preferred popular boulevard theatre such as vaudeville and melodrama over more highbrow genres such as tragedy, high comedy, opera or *drame bourgeois*. Indeed, 75% of the repertoire was popular boulevard theatre (vaudeville, melodrama, *féerie*, parade, and pantomime) while only 15% was more 'high brow' genres (tragedy, comedy and drama).

Vaudeville

Of all the genres performed at Portchester Castle, vaudeville is by far the most prevalent. The playbills from the V&A indicate a total of 35 vaudeville performances between 21 September 1810 and 5 January 1811.[93] Some afternoon performances consisted entirely of back-to-back performances of vaudevilles. On Monday, 24 September 1810, the Théâtre des Variétés at Portchester Castle presented three vaudevilles: *La Fête de Lise* [*The Celebration of Lise*], *Bossomanie, or Hunch-backs Forever,* and *Le Gallant Savetier* [*The Gallant Cobbler*],[94] and Monday, 29th October, the *société* presented *Monsieur Vautour*, *The Two Martines*, *The Recruit,* and *The Pegs of M. Adam*. In most cases vaudevilles accompanied longer three-act plays.

With simplistic plots, recognizable stock characters and featuring popular songs of the period, it easy to understand why vaudeville was so prevalent at

[93] Playbills, V&A: THM /415/2/1-18.
[94] Playbills, V&A: THM /415/2/18.

Portchester Castle. The fact that vaudevilles were short meant that they were easy to rehearse and they required less ambitious staging used for the larger *grands spectacles*. With their popular songs, vaudevilles lightened the tone of the theatre, particularly after or before a melodrama, balancing out an evening of entertainment in the theatre.

One of the first historians of the genre, Gidel, points out that vaudeville took its subjects from a variety of sources. He groups the subject matter into: parodies of operas, satirical treatment of mythological material, oriental themes, moral allegorical pieces, and more realistic 'poissard' pieces dealing with the life of the popular classes of Paris.[95] The theatre *société* provided hand-written abstracts to accompany the plays, which give us a sense of their subject matter and general plot.[96] All of the above listed plays focus on the common theme of marriage which was prevalent in most nineteenth-century vaudeville. Most vaudevilles feature a lover who seeks a marriage, is thwarted in their endeavour, but is eventually united with their lover.

In the first act of *La Fête de Lise*,[97] Mathurin, Lise's father, wants her to marry either the upstanding bailiff of the village or Nigaudim, 'a Stupid fellow'. Her father fixes her marriage date on her birthday. However, Allain, Lise's preferred lover, is informed of her father's determination, offers her flowers and gives her a kiss but is detected by the bailiff and runs away. While the bailiff is alone with Lise, he makes a declaration of love, and is soon joined by Nigaudim and her father. Both men press her father to give them his daughter's hand in marriage. Presently, a navy captain, Mr. Francbord, arrives on the scene, and Lise, hoping to put off her two detested suitors suggests they marry. The navy captain offers himself to Mathurin as a husband for his daughter. In order to

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[95] Henry Gidel, *Le vaudeville* (Paris: P.U.F., 1986). The terms 'poissard' relates etymologically to 'poix' (pitch or tar), and to the poor. It came to be associated with the fish-sellers of La Halle, and in particular, with their dialect.

[96] THM/415/1/4: Among the other summaries of vaudeville at the V&A, the prisoners wrote and performed *La Fête de Lise* (Nouveaux-Troubadours, 1805), *Bossomanie, or Hunch-Backs for ever, La Leçon de Botanque* (Dupaty), *The Prussian Milkmaid* (possibly *La Laitière prussienne* by Jean-Louis Gabiot [1759-1811] performed at the Ambigu-Comique, 1805), and *Monsieur Guillaume* (Radet, Barré, Destontaines and Bourgueil, 1800).

[97] V&A: THM/415/1/4.

punish Lise for her little plot, the captain makes her believe that he is going with the father to have the contract of marriage drawn. In the second act, Allain returns, informing Lise that he has gained a new job and being newly rich believes that her father will have no objection to the match. However, Lise tells him that her father wants to give her in marriage to Mr. Francbord. Allain attempts to the stop the marriage contract. Mr. Francbord feigns refusal at first, but Allain pleads with Mathurin until at last he gives his consent to their marriage.

Mistaken identity is another comic theme commonly found in the vaudeville performed at Portchester Castle. In *Bossomanie, or Hunch-Backs Forever*[98] the stock *commedia dell'arte* figures of Cassandre, Colombine and Harlequin are brought to life. In this one-act vaudeville, Cassandre is a hunchback who wants to marry his daughter Colombine with Gilles, a fellow hunchback. Colombine, however, is in love Harlequin, who, in order to obtain permission to marry her, presents himself to Cassandre as a hunchback. Overjoyed at the discovery, Cassandre gives his consent, but finds too late that he has been tricked.

Similarly, in the two-act *Monsieur Guillaume* [*Mr William*], the young Hippolite, a minor painter living in the house of Mr Maurice falls in love with his daughter. Hippolite entreats his house mate Mr William to help him convince Mr Maurice to let him marry his daughter. In the second act, Mr Furville, Hippolite's father, arrives to interrupt the proposed marriage. Mr William endeavours to reconcile father and son, but Mr Furville will not listen. Mr William then reveals his true identity as Mr Lamoignon de Malsherbes, grand chancellor. Mr Furville yields and forgives his son and the lovers are married.

Finally, in *La Laitière prussienne* [*The Prussian Milk Maid*], Frederick the King of Prussia wants to marry one of his grenadiers to a beautiful young milkmaid and gives her a bank bill. The young girl dares not go for the money herself but instead sends an old woman in her place. On her arrival at the post office, the bank bill is opened, and contains an order to keep the bearer prisoner

[98] V&A: THM/415/1/4.

in the guardhouse so that she can be married to the grenadier. When the grenadier arrives, however, he refuses to marry such an old woman. The King is alerted, sends for the milkmaid, and marries her to the grenadier.

The comic element in each vaudeville is the build up to a moment of revelation (or *agnitio*) where a character is tricked or a lover's true identity is revealed. In *Bossomanie,* it is the moment when Harlequin reveals he is not a hunchback and Cassandre is tricked. In *Monsieur William* it is the moment when the eponymous Mr William reveals his true identity as a grand chancellor while in *The Prussian Milkmaid*, it is the moment when the grenadier mistakenly believes the old woman is to be his intended wife. Each of the moments has the possibility for over-theatricality required to heighten the full comic effect.

With *Bossomanie*, for instance, it is easy to imagine the actor throwing off his costume to reveal a padded hunchback, and Cassandre's crippling despair at the revelation, or Colombine's gushing adoration. Meanwhile, in *The Prussian Milkmaid,* the actor portraying the old woman (most likely Gruentgentz, who plays *les mères*) would no doubt have played up the comic role of a revolting spinster to the disgusted, dissolute young grenadier.

While vaudevilles may provide light and easy entertainment, they also contain moralistic themes of goodwill rewarded, justice served, lovers married, and living happily ever after common in most nineteenth-century theatre. In other words, in a typical vaudeville structure an obstacle arises and is overcome with a 'happily ever after' ending.

Melodrama

Of the *grandes pièces* (plays with three or more acts) performed at Portchester Castle melodrama was the most popular. Between September 1810 and January 1811 there were a total of 9 performances of melodramas compared to 2 performances of comedy. Of all the playwrights represented in the repertoire of Portchester Castle, Pixérécourt is by far the most popular. René-Guilbert Pixérécourt, who was active in Paris from 1793 to 1833, is universally acknowledged as 'the father of melodrama', the man who, '[m]ore than any other single playwright', was 'responsible for establishing' both 'the conventions of

melodrama' and 'its popularity among spectators'.[99] On 21 September 1810 Pixérécourt's *Cœlina, ou L'Enfant du mystère* [*Cœlina, or the Child of Mystery*] was the first play to be performed. This was followed by another one of Pixérécourt's most popular works, *La Femme à deux maris* [*The Wife of Two Husbands*] performed on 19 October 1810.

Cœlina first premiered on 2 September 1800 at the Ambigu-Comique in Paris and was an immediate hit. The play was based on a popular novel by François Ducray-Duminil, which had been published two years earlier. The play tells the story of Dufour, a bourgeois patriarch whose family live in the mountains of Savoy in eastern France. Dufour is the guardian of the young Cœlina who is in love with his son, Stephany. The family are preparing to host Truguelin, who has his own plans to marry Cœlina to his son in order to gain her inheritance. Before Truguelin's arrival, the family are visited by a mute, Francisque, revealing that he was attacked years earlier and that his tongue was cut out. Michaud, a cobbler, discovers Truguelin was the villain who mutilated Francisque. In a highly dramatic confrontation, Truguelin flees and finds himself upon a bridge at the Apennez Pass where he is cornered by Michaud, a friend of Dufor's family. It is revealed that Francisque is Cœlina's biological father. Truguelin falls from a ledge to his death, and Dufour gives his consent for Cœlina to marry Stephany.

The second Pixérécourt melodrama on the Portchester stage was *La Femme à deux maris* [*The Wife of Two Husbands*] performed on 12 October 1810. *La Femme à deux maris* was announced as a great success following its premiere at the Ambigu-Comique on 13 September 1802. Adapted from a Ducray-Duminil novel, the plot hinges on Eliza discovering that her villainous first husband, Fritz, had faked his death in order one day to appear and claim possession of all Eliza has been given by her second husband, Edouard. He is recognized and arrested as a deserter by the uncle of her second husband, who offers him an escape route in order to save his wife's name being connected with a condemned man. Fritz is happy to take the money but determined to kill

[99] Gabrielle Hyslop, 'Pixérécourt and the French Melodrama Debate: Instructing Boulevard Theatre Audiences', in *Melodrama*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 61–85 (p. 63).

Edouard nevertheless and arranges for an accomplice to assassinate him. Edouard's concierge, a wily retired corporal, foils the plot and his accomplice kills Fritz by mistake.

Staging *Cœlina* and *La Femme à deux maris* allowed the prisoners to flex their creative muscles in a way they simply could not do before at the Isla de Leon or on Cabrera. These two Pixérécourt melodramas demonstrate high production value with scene sets of dungeons, a cave and stormy Alps utilizing effects of thunder and lightning, and with dramatic entrances and escapes, and characters plummeting to their deaths all accentuated with music and songs. Carré's ingenuity was allowed to shine through, and the orchestra was put to work creating dramatic musical accompaniment.

The setting of *Cœlina* is typical of a Pixérécourt melodrama. The play opens in Act I in the genteel domestic environment, 'une salle basse de la maison de Dufour, donnant sur le jardin'. However, by Act III, the scene has shifted dramatically to 'un lieu sauvage' ['a wild setting'] on the Arpennaz pass between two mountains. Pixérécourt's stage directions are extremely detailed, leaving very little to the imagination, so that provinicial theatres could recreate the productions faithfully. During the entr'acte, the playwright gives instructions:

> Pendant l'entr'acte on entend le bruit éloigné du tonnerre; bientôt l'orage augmente, et au lever du Rideau toute la nature paroit en désordre; les éclairs brillent de toutes parts, le torrent roule avec fureur, les vents mugissent, la pluie tombe avec fracas, et des coups de tonnerre multipliés qui se répetent cent fois, par l'écho des montagnes, portent l'épouvante et la terreur dans l'ame.[100]
>
> [During the interval the distant sound of thunder is heard; soon the storm increases, and at the rising of the curtain all nature appears in disorder; lightning flashes on all sides, the torrent rolls with fury, the winds roar, the rain falls with a crash, and thunder-claps multiplied and repeated a

[100] *Cœlina*, entracte II-III.

hundred times by the echo of the mountains, bring dread and terror to the soul.]

Creating this storm scene would not have been beyond Carré's expertise. The cor and timbale would make effective sound effects to accompany the stage drama. Although there is no evidence of the mise-en-scene at Portchester Castle, we do know what was performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris where Carré worked. Moreover, we have surviving drops and stage effects that demonstrate what Carré had previously worked with (see fig. 13). These could potentially give us an idea of what Portchester Castle may have resembled. From Carré's stage machinery to Corret's music to Thenard's dancers, melodrama provided the *société* with a prime opportunity to utilize all the talents available at Portchester Castle to produce spectacle similar to that of boulevard theatres of Paris.

Jalousies et querelles littéraires ['Jealousies and Literary Quarrels']

Crowded into a dense prison, with strong-willed personalities, and creative passions flowing freely, tensions often reached dangerous peaks within the theatrical community at Portchester Castle. Anger was easily aroused and we find animosity and jealousy amongst the prisoners who were confined in close quarters. While theatre certainly served as a place of 'coming together', it would be overly simplistic to suggest that there were no internal conflicts within the theatrical society. 'Nous avions des auteurs, des pièces nouvelles', writes Quantin, 'et conséquemment des cabales, des jalousies et des querelles littéraires' ['We had authors and new plays, and consequently cabals, , jealousies and literary quarrels'].[101]

On 8th March 1813 these 'jalousies' and 'querelles littéraires' produced fatal results. *The Times* reported that 'at 7.30 in the evening, when prisoners were confined to their cells and preparing for bed', one French prisoner, Antoine Tardif, in a moment of calculated revenge, 'rushed upon a fellow prisoner [Jean Lequey] with a knife and stabbed him to death'. According to *The Times*, Tardif was apparently 'so determined' in his murder quest that 'he had ground the point

[101] Quantin, II, p. 136.

of his knife sharp for many days and bound the handle with twine so that his hand would not slip'.[102] Tardif's crime appears to have been premeditated, cold-blooded murder.

Antoine Tardif was 48 years old when he arrived at Portchester on 18 June 1810. He had been captured on 14 December 1809 in Guadeloupe. Born in Chambo, Equador, Tardif was described as a swarthy man with black hair and black eyes. His victim, Jean Leqay, was only 31 when he arrived at the prison in July 1810.[103] Immediately following the murder, Tardif was seized by the prison guards and taken to trial in nearby Winchester where he was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. In the Castle Yard at Portchester Castle, Tardif was placed upon cart with a rope drawn around his neck. Reports claims that 7,000 spectators watched the proceedings, but noted that Tardif 'was a ruffian and he would not wear a hood over his face'.[104] According to the *Hampshire Telegraph*, the motive for Tardif's vengeful act was conceived as 'an expressive jealousy against [Leqay] on account of his superior tallant [sic] in writing [...] little pieces for the stage'.[105] Tardif's crime was the only reported disturbance to arise at the theatre of Portchester Castle.

Leqay's murder highlights the underlying tensions in the densely populated prisoner environment where upwards of 7,000 men were housed in close-quarters. Moreover, the tragic episode underlines the deeper passions and emotions aroused by the creative energies invested in the theatrical milieu at Portchester Castle. While the theatre may have served as a creative outlet, an opportunity for the community to come together, it invariably also had its own in-fighting and jealousies that, heightened by the emotional and psychological strains of captivity, could potentially spike to dangerous levels. Far from being a means of merely passing time, theatre was at the core of the prisoners' existence in captivity, quite literally, a matter of life or death.

[102] *The Times*, 1 April 1813.
[103] TNA: ADM 103/333.
[104] *The Times*, 1 April 1813.
[105] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 March 1813.

Chapter 8

ROSELISKA, OU AMOUR, HAINE, ET VENGEANCE

Introduction

On 2 November 1810, the *société* of the Théâtre des Variétés of Portchester Castle staged its own three-act melodrama *Roséliska, ou amour, haine et vengeance* written by Jean-Louis Lafontaine and François Mouillefarine. The play resonates with familiar themes of the departed soldier, and a motif of captivity all underlined with anxieties about betrayal, loyalty, love, and home. The play is all the more unique because it was written by the prisoners themselves and provides an opportunity to glimpse their own emotional and psychological dynamics.

Roséliska is set in Poland and opens at the castle of Count Stanislas and his wife, Roséliska. The play opens with the servants Walko (Paullel) and Fresca (Gruentgentz) busy making preparation for Stanislas' return from war in a distant land. Before her husband arrives, Roséliska (Sutat) is courted by Count Polowitz (Belin), Stanislas' friend, who professes his unyielding desire for her. When she rejects his advances he schemes a plan with his valet, Metusko (Mouillefarine), to kidnap her and imprison her to his castle. Stanislas (Lafontaine) returns, but Polotwitz, jealous of Roséliska's love for her husband, abducts her. Stanislas goes after her, but finds himself trapped and imprisoned in the tower. By chance, Stanislas is able to loosen the bars of the window of his cell, and escapes from the tower. Meanwhile, Roséliska's gaoler, Caski (Breton), has a crisis of conscience and decides to disobey his villainous master, Count Polowitz, and free Roséliska. Stanislas leads an army to Polowitz's castle. When Polowitz discovers that Stanislas has escaped, he turns on his valet, Metusko, and orders him away. Stanislas confronts Polowitz, and in a climax, Caski, stabs his master. Finally, Roséliska and Stanislas are reunited. Stanislas praises Caski for his valour, and all celebrate the triumph of virtue and the punishment of villainy.

Roséliska is the first and only known full-length play written by the prisoners that survives. The playbill highlights that the new production is

accompanied by 'new scenery and decorations', suggesting that the prisoners made special arrangement for this particular play.[1] A presentation to Captain Paterson gives us some indications about the play. In English the prisoners wrote: 'May you feel concerned for Roséliska's fate, and we shall feel grateful and happy if by the offer of a few days labour we have met with your approbation'. From this inscription we gather that the play was written hastily over 'few days labour', and therefore we might assume that prisoners had only a few days to rehearse the script before performance.

Dramaturgy and Staging

In July 2017 the play was performed in the basement Keep at Portchester Castle with six-piece orchestra and professional acting troupe. These rehearsals and performances illuminated several aspects of the prisoners' theatricals, and *Roséliska* in particular. Perhaps the most complicated part of staging is Stanislas' escape from the window of the tower. Unfortunately we have no evidence of how the prisoners staged this escape. The stage directions simply indicate that Stanislas is 'dans la tour' ['in the tower'] and then 'il attache sa ceinture et descend' ['he attaches his belt and descends']. There are any number of ways the prisoners' could have staged this important escape. The most probable method would have been to use the castle structure itself. There are two windows in the original structure of the north wall of the keep that lead into what the prisoners' were effectively using as a green-room. The window closest to the stage has since been bricked shut, but there is a strong likihood that Lafontaine might have used this window by climbing through from the green-room and appearing suddenly in the auditorium above the audience.

In the performance of *Roséliska* the cast identified an excess of exposition in some of the lines identifying characters or describing events as they were happening on stage. Throughout the rehearsal and performance process, however, we discovered that the music and spoken dialogue could be easily heard on the floors above the theatre where the prisoners were housed. The

[1] V&A: THM /415/2/18.

physical structure of the castle keep has remained relatively unchanged since the prisoners' were performing from 1810 to 1814, so the acoustics would have remained more or less unchanged.

We know that only 200 to 250 prisoners were able to fit into the theatre. However, the keep itself housed upwards of 3,000 prisoners. It is therefore likely that prisoners were listening to the performances from the upper floors of the keep. These lines of exposition and identification may therefore have been written for the prisoners on the upper floors of the castle keep who could not see the action of the play, but could hear it. Effectively, this means that the performances were very similar to a radio play for the prisoners in the upper levels of the keep, and the audience for these theatricals was closer to 3,250 prisoners.

Melodrama and Trauma

Roséliska demonstrates that the prisoners were actively interacting with the styles and trends of French theatre at a small outpost on the south coast of England. The play's similarity to Pixérécourt's melodramas demonstrates that the prisoners had an awareness of theatrical trends, and were actively engaged with a similar theatrical milieu of their native home. Moreover, the original text of *Roséliska* reflects and represents a poignant moment in the prisoners' experience of captivity. Perhaps more than other play in the repertoire, it is significant for unmasking the true concerns, fears, doubts, and anxieties held by the prisoners.

While vaudevilles provided short, comic, light-hearted entertainment for the prisoners, melodrama presented more profound and dynamic possibilities. Scholars have taken a variety of approaches to illuminating the role of melodrama in Revolutionary and Empire society. Peter Brooks, for example, sees melodrama as an essentially 'moral' response to the Revolution's 'liquidation of the sacred'.[2] Matthew Buckley analyses the genre as an expression of the

[2] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 15.

extreme emotions of the revolutionary period.[3] Gabrielle Hyslop sees it as a conservative, post-Revolution backlash,[4] as to some degree does Lynn Hunt, who views early melodrama as part of a post-regicidal 'rehabilitation' of the patriarchal family.[5] While numerous theorists have postulated on the relevance and meaning of melodrama in French society in the Revolution and Empire period, I will discuss its relevance to the French prisoners of war.

Late twentieth-century scholarship on melodrama tends to view the genre as a necessary reaction to the social and ideological upheaval of the Revolution and subsequent tumult of the 1790s. Most notably in *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Peter Brooks attributes the emergence of melodrama to a collective renegotiation of cultural values in post-Revolutionary France. He asserts that melodrama 'comes into being in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been thrown violently into question'. Brooks characterises the nature of melodrama as a 'manichaeistic struggle of good and evil' which 'becomes the principal mode for uncovering, demonstrating, and making operative the essential moral universe in a post-sacred era'. He asserts that melodrama 'starts from and expresses the anxiety brought by a frightening new world in which the traditional patterns of moral order no longer provide the necessary social glue'.[6] Melodrama incorporates the dual role of theatre not only as a didactic tool to 'entertain and instruct' but also to provide a 'moral universe' in post-Revolutionary French society which, he suggests, yearned for a sort of social equilibrium in the wake of the traumatic renegotiation and reordering of social norms, hierarchies and institutions.

Matthew Buckley is more specific in highlighting the way melodrama 'framed its narratives of trauma from the start within closing fantasies of

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[3] Matthew Buckley, *Tragedy Walks the Streets: The French Revolution in the Making of Modern Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Matthew Buckley, 'Refugee Theatre: Melodrama and Modernity's Loss', *Theatre Journal*, 61 (2009), 175–90.

[4] Gabrielle Hyslop, 'Pixérécourt and the French Melodrama Debate: Instructing Boulevard Theatre Audiences', in *Melodrama*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 61–85.

[5] Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 190.

[6] Brooks, pp. 15-20.

redemptive justice and restored community'.[7] For Buckley, 'the orphan, the mute witness to crime, the dispossessed heir, the exiled aristocratic villain, the suffering young woman seeking the solace of a lost world of domestic stability' are all facets of a dramatic form attempting to mend itself following the traumatic upheaval of the Revolution.

Paul Marcoux ties the narrative of melodrama closely to trauma and ideas of nostalgic longing. He points out that 'the uncertainty which inevitably follows catastrophe tends to encourage hindsight rather than innovation'. For Marcoux, melodrama catered to hindsight 'by creating a world which paralleled current French society, but endowed it with a nostalgic fragrance'. While the world of melodrama was often set in 'exotic geographic and historical setting', it nonetheless provided a certainty where there was 'no ambiguity, no waffling, no real danger of annihilation'. Melodrama created a world that mirrored the security and certainty of the past, where 'evildoers would be punished and that eventually the natural goodness of man would prevail'. The result, Marcoux suggests, is that melodrama created a ''good-old-days' syndrome' with its emphasis on 'a clearly established hierarchy of values' that provided a good deal of comfort for multi-class audiences frequenting the theatres on the 'Boulevard du Crime' in the early 1800s where they were 're-enacting the trauma of their own lives, but in a more attractive setting'.[8] Unlike the boulevard audiences, the prisoners at Portchester Castle were re-enacting the trauma of their own lives in a much less attractive setting.

In the context of French prisoners of war at Portchester Castle performances of melodrama are partly circumstantial, but also partly imbued with deeper resonances within the narrative of negotiating trauma suggested by Brooks, Buckley, and Marcoux. As we have seen, when the prisoners arrive at Portchester Castle, they find the means and resources to produce the spectacle that melodrama requires. Yet we will also note that the prisoners' waste no time in staging their first play, and it is no accident that this is a melodrama. From September 1810 to January 1811, the prisoners stage no less than seven

[7] Buckley, 'Modernity', p. 180.
[8] Paul Marcoux, *Guilbert de Pixérécourt: French Melodrama in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 7.

individual three-act plays of which six are melodramas. The prisoners arrive at Portchester Castle after two years of gruelling captivity at Cadiz and Cabrera. Melodrama voices an attempt to make sense of the trauma and upheaval of their captivity.

In the historic discourse of the early nineteenth century, melodrama opened debates about morality and the didactic nature of theatre in society. In his review of Pixérécourt's *La Femme à deux maris* in the *Journal des Debats* (1802), contemporary drama critic Geoffroy writes that 'la première loi du code dramatique moderne […] est de réformer les mœurs et d'inspirer la vertu' ['the first law of the modern dramatic code is to reform morals and inspire virtue'].[9] Writing years later, Charles Nodier noted a similar phenomenon within the world of Pixérécourt's melodramas in early nineteenth-century France. Nodier reflected on the impact melodrama had on audiences in Paris, observing that melodrama 'n'inspirait que des idées de justice et d'humanité, ne faisait naître que des émulations vertueuses, n'éveillait que de tendres et généreuses sympathies, et qu'on en sortait rarement sans se trouver meilleur' ['only inspired ideas of justice and humanity, only gave birth to tender and generous sympathies, so that one seldom emerged from it without finding oneself improved'].[10] Justice and humanity are the core themes of the two Pixérécourt melodramas performed at Portchester Castle as well as in *Roséliska* where goodness and virtue are rewarded, villainy and treachery are punished.

While moral improvement may not have been the most compelling reason for the theatre society at Portchester to choose melodrama, there is very little doubt that 'des idées de justice et d'humanité' had shadowed the prisoners' experiences since their captivity in 1808. Melodrama spoke directly to the experience of these particular prisoners. It helped them make sense of their terrible plight. Indeed, the journey and conditions endured by these French prisoners on their tortuous six-year captivity was the antithesis of 'justice and humanity'.

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[9] Julien Louis Geoffroy, *Cours de littérature dramatique*, VI (Paris: Blanchard, 1825), p. 94.
[10] Charles Nodier, 'Introduction', *Théâtre choisi de Guilbert de Pixérécourt,* ed. Charles Nodier (Paris: Tresse, 1841), p. iii.

Peter Brooks asserts that melodrama 'starts from and expresses the anxiety brought by a frightening new world in which the traditional patterns of moral order no longer provide the necessary social glue'. While Brooks is writing about French society in the wake of the Revolution, the prisoners certainly faced 'a frightening new world' both at Cabrera and now at Portchester Castle. Arriving at Portchester in July 1810, the prisoners had already witnessed a horrific breakdown of social norms, hierarchies and institutions in which the 'social glue' of traditional patterns of moral order was already coming unstuck.[11]

The majority of the prisoners started as young eighteen-year-old conscripts.[12] Most were young men like Jean-François Carré, at the beginning of their professional careers, with little or no training in combat and entirely unaccustomed to the rigours of warfare. Suddenly plucked from their homes, these untrained conscripts were forced to march through the hostile plains of Andalucía where they witnessed gruesome sights of French troops mutilated and burned by Spanish bandits and guerrillas.[13] The French soldiers then suffered one of the largest and most humiliating defeats of Peninsular Wars at the Battle of Bailen on 19 July 1808. After marching miles to Cadiz under the hot summer sun of Andalucía with the hope of repatriation only to find themselves captives on prison hulks before being transported to Cabrera, all hope of freedom lost. After nearly fourteen months on Cabrera with limited food or clothing or shelter, the survivors are then brought to Portchester Castle where they will spend an indefinite period of imprisonment, living in close-quarters many miles from the comforts of their homes, and with no foreseeable hope of freedom.

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[11] Brooks, p. 20.

[12] The majority of General Dupont's army were new conscripts. Sir Charles Oman writes, 'Among the 19,000 infantry of Dupont's corps […] there was actually only two battalions (1,700 men) of old troops. This simple fact goes far to explain why Dupont's expedition to Andalusia led to the capitulation of Baylen [sic]. Countries cannot be conquered with hordes of undrilled conscripts'. Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War: Volume I: 1807-1809* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p.107.

[13] The scenes are described vividly by both Quantin and Gille. For information about Goya's depictions of the atrocities see, Emilio La Parra López, ed., *La Guerra de Napoleón en España: reacciones, imágenes, consecuencias* (San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2010). See also Charles Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon: Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808-1814* (London: Yale University Press, 2004); Ronald Fraser, *Napoleon's Cursed War: Spanish Popular Resistance in the Peninsular War, 1808-1814* (London: Verso, 2007).

In all of this, perhaps the most tragic unsticking of 'social glue' came when officers and *sous-officiers* left their less fortunate comrades behind on the island of Cabrera and departed for England in July 1810. At this moment, 'des idées de justice et d'humanité', came under critical strain. To cope with this moral dilemma, at Portchester Castle the survivors turned to melodrama to help reset their moral compass, and crucially, to make sense of the world where 'traditional patterns of moral order' had broken down.[14]

With *Roséliska*, we find that the prisoners of Portchester Castle have assimilated their trauma into the play text itself creating what Marcoux called 'a clearly established hierarchy of values' that helped them to process the trauma of their own lives. Sonja Kuftnic finds that theatre 'provides a way to 'deal more effectively' with past events through metaphorical means'. Kuftnic found that the theatre in the prison camp served as an 'in-between space of no-longer-home and not-yet-elsewhere', where prisoners could create familiar performances 'that worked to navigate nostalgia and contain trauma, striving to generate new narratives of belonging and modes of being'.[15] In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Felman and Laub look at the trauma of the Holocaust and explore the relationship between literature and psychology in the retelling of life accounts in interviews, fiction and film. They show how 'issues of biography and history are neither simply represented or simply reflected, but are reinscribed, translated, radically rethought and fundamentally worked over by the text'.[16] Their studies show that by bearing witness to the Holocaust, by testifying, by creating new forms of narrative, writers can assimilate the trauma. Throughout the prisoners' repertoire we have seen thematic trends of escape, judgement and redemption. In *Roséliska* we have actual textual evidence that the prisoners were assimilating deeper issues of trauma into their theatricals.

[14] Brooks, p. 15.
[15] Kuftinec, p. 40.
[16] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, eds, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. xiv-xv.

Love, Hatred and Vengance

In *Roséliska, ou amour, haine et vengeance,* Lafontaine and Mouillefarine combine all the themes of nostalgia, home-coming, valour, honour and brotherhood in one dramatic play, uniting some of the fundamental elements of structure and style of an early nineteenth-century melodrama, but disregard others. The opening scenes of *Roséliska* bear strong resemblance to those in Pixérécourt's *Les Mines de Pologne* (Ambigu-Comique, 3 May 1803), and Varez and Armand-Séville's *Métusko, ou, les polonais* (Théâtre de la Gaîté, 23 July 1808). The play also borrows some elements from Pixérécourt's *Rosa, ou l'Hermitage du torrent* (Théâtre de la Gaité, 9 August 1800). Act III of *Rosa* is set in a tower of the castle of Theodore where Rosa and her son Prosper find themselves being held captive. Like in *Roséliska*, the captive is only freed when the gaoler, in this case, Bertrand, decides to disobey his master and free the captives. Both *Roséliska* and *Métusko* open with servants celebrating the return of their master, but from there they both diverge. However, it is very clear that that Lafontaine and Mouillefarine borrowed many of their character names from the earlier melodrama including the eponymous character, Métusko, and Polinski (Stanislas' brother) while the eponymous Roséliska is remarkably similar to Pauliska, the heroine of *Métusko*.

Métusko premiered in Paris in July 1808. Since most of the *société* had already left for Spain by that point it is highly unlikely that they would have seen the production in Paris. However, not all the *sociétaires* had in fact left Paris. François Mouillefarine, the co-author of *Roséliska*, served on-board the D'Hautpoult, which set out on its maiden voyage to Martinique on February 1809 only to be captured by the Royal Navy on 17 April 1809. This gives Mouillefarine a six-month window in which he might have taken the opportunity to see *Métusko* performed at the Théâtre de la Gaîté.

While we may note that *Roséliska* reflects varying degrees of similarity with these earlier melodramas, it is the play's divergence from its predecessors that provides unique insights not only into the audience and physical staging at Portchester Castle, but more importantly, into the hopes and fears, the needs and desires of those prisoners themselves, illustrating how the text negotiates the

trauma of captivity. Indeed there are two major themes at the core of the play that directly resonate with the prisoners' own circumstances.

The first is the theme of imprisonment. The major dramatic action of the play involves escaping from imprisonment in a castle setting not entirely unlike the surroundings at Portchester Castle. First, the virtuous Roséliska finds herself imprisoned in 'des souterrains' ['the dungeons'] of Polowitz's castle, no doubt very similar to the basement keep in which the prisoners had erected their theatre. The hero Stanislas likewise finds himself imprisoned in 'une tour' ['a tower'] very similar to the Norman Keep at Portchester Castle.

The connection between Stanislas' tower and Portchester Castle is made clear when Stanislas' brother Polinski finds him trying to escape through the window. Polinski calls to Stanislas that he cannot escape because of the moat surrounding the castle, but Stanislas replies that 'l'eau dont il était remplie est entièrement ecoulée' ['the water that filled it has entirely drained away'] (*Roséliska*, iii. 4). There are two moats surrounding Portchester Castle, one on the exterior of the castle, and one around the outer-Bailey. Archaeological evidence suggests that the moat at Portchester Castle itself had been drained in the late eighteenth century.

Drawing this parallel between the fictional prison and Portchester Castle is significant as it draws the thematic tone closer to the plight of the audience watching the play. Stanislas escapes from the tower when he discovers that the bars on the windows of his prison cell are loose. He happens to discover some pieces of metal in his cell and removes the prison bars, and then with the help of a belt, he climbs down the side of the tower wall. The virtuous Roséliska, on the other hand, is freed from her dungeon prison only by the efforts of her gaoler Caski, who, after a crisis of conscience, refutes the orders of his villainous master Polowitz, and decides to free his captive. It is ultimately Caski who facilitates the long-awaited reunification of the lovers, and is acknowledged for his heroic deeds.

From the playbills we know that both Captain Paterson and the head of the prison guard, Major Gentz, attended the theatricals at Portchester Castle. The memoirists also mention that some prison guards attended the productions as

well. Caski's message that 'j'ai vu punir le crime et recompenser la vertu' ['I have seen crime punished and virtue rewarded'] is a particularly poignant plea from the prisoners to their gaolers (*Roséliska*, iii. 14). Caski provides a rather blatant projection of the ideal, humane prison guard as a model for the prison guards in the audience at Portchester Castle.

Another poignant theme in the play is marital fidelity. In *Roséliska*, the heroine remains faithful to her husband despite her long separation. The war-hero Stanislas has left his wife, his home, and his people, called by his king to defend his homeland. There are strong resonances in this theme amongst the French prisoners held at Portchester Castle, many of whom had been conscripted by their Emperor, Napoleon, and forced to fight. Like the fictional Stanislas these prisoners were forced to leave their loved ones at home in France. Roséliska despairs over the prolonged separation from her husband and the pressures of being left behind to defend herself against unwelcome advances. The length of Stanislas's absence is elemental to Roséliska's grief. 'Si ton absence,' Roséliska frets, 'et les dangers auxquels tu etais exposé m'ont causé de vives allarmes combien aussi ton retour me fait éprouver de douceurs' ['If your absence and the dangers you have faced have caused me such bitter anguish, how much sweet joy do I now feel upon your return'] (*Roséliska*, i. 4). Roséliska hints at the suffering she endured in her husband's absence while 'le devoir l'emportait sur l'amour' ['duty prevailed over love']. 'Un instant près de Stanislas', she says, 'effacera de ma mémoire tout ce que j'ai souffert loin de lui' ['One moment at Stanlisas' side will wipe from my memory all that I have suffered when away from him'] (*Roséliska*, i. 3). By the time *Roséliska* was being performed in 1810, the prisoners had already been absent for at least three years and had themselves suffered considerably.

The anxiety experienced by the prisoners is manifest in a scene of the play when the villainous Polowitz attempts to coax Roséliska to betray her husband for him. When Polowitz confronts Roséliska about his love for her, he asks: 'Ne craignez-vous pas que l'absence n'ait apporté quelques changements aux sentiments d'amour qu'il vous prodiguait avant son départ?' ['Do you not fear that absence may have brought some change to those feelings of love he

professed to you before he departed?'] (*Roséliska*, i. 5). The virtuous Roséliska resolutely refuses Polowitz's advances saying:

> Je suis sure de la tendresse de mon époux. Mille fois il a daigné m'en donner des preuves touchantes et quand il serait tel que vous le dépeignez à mes yeux, je ne me serais attendu avoir sortir un tel aveu de la bouche d'un ami qu'il regarde et traite comme un frère.
>
> [I am certain of my husband's affection. A thousand times he has deigned to give me touching proof of it, and even if he were as you depict him to my eyes, I would not have expected such words from the mouth of a friend whom he regards and treats as a brother.]

Here we find a thinly veiled projection of the prisoners' own hopes, that their loved ones will remain faithful to them in their absence. Marital fidelity is only part of the moral tissue of the play. While abducting Roséliska is a serious crime, it is the betrayal of friends, fellow countrymen—Polowitz's betrayal of Stanislas—that comes across as the more present and potent offense. Betrayal of fraternity is more despicable that the act of the abduction itself. This speaks in part to the betrayal of the prisoners from Cabrera, it also sends a message of trust and loyalty between the prisoners while also speaking to wider concerns. Betrayal is a strong thread of popular melodrama wherein a trusted member of society is revealed as evil. In *Roséliska*, Polowitz serves as a friend of the family who courts Stanislas's wife, 'je ne me serais attendu avoir sortir un tel aveu de la bouche d'un ami qu'il regarde et traite comme un frère' ['I would not have expected such words from the mouth of a friend whom he regards and treats as a brother'] (*Roséliska*, i. 5). Polowitz betrays his loyalty to Stanislas and abducts his wife. This betrayal forms the main conflict of the play, and suggests that this betrayal of friendship between two men is more sinister than the act of abducting Roséliska.

For the prisoners of Portchester Castle, betrayal was a familiar and unfortunate fact of the recent past. As prisoners at the Isla León, and later on

Cabrera, the prisoners had been betrayed by the Spanish government. They were then betrayed by their own officers who left them marooned on the island while they left for parole. The villainous Polowitz represents an entire system that oppressed, that lied to, that betrayed the French prisoners from the moment of their capture in Spain to their internment at Portchester. Polowitz's ultimate eradication served as a signal that justice had been done and order restored. Roséliska's vulnerability may be a manifestation of the prisoners' own latent anxieties, many of whom had not had contact with their loved ones back in France for several years. However, her steadfast resolve may have served not so much for dramatic effect as to quell the homesick hearts of the prisoners, vis-à-vis the moral universe of the melodrama. The ending of *Roséliska* is not only a coded plea for release, it sets a paradigm of moral order within Portchester. On stage, the gaoler realises the virtue of freedom, the prisoners are released, and the world is set right.

The moral universe of *Roséliska* explores themes of marital fidelity, of betrayal, not to mention escape and the moral responsibility of captors and captives. Here we find the prisoners' own inner thoughts and desires exposed in a way that memoir—written years after the event, and with the benefit of hindsight—simply cannot produce. Through *Roséliska,* the prisoners not only channel their own cultural identity—melodrama, as we shall see in the next chapter, was an inherently French genre—but also, open a space for discussing, displaying, and potential 'assimilating' their own trauma of captivity.

Chapter 9

REACTION AND RECEPTION
Anglo-French Theatrical Exchanges

Melodramatic Virus

Referring to the popularity of pantomime performance in British prisoner-of-war camps during World War I, Victor Emeljanow points out that 'pantomime's role as a national institution, usually regarded as the one peculiarly British theatrical form, gave it a particular wartime significance'.[1] For the British captives, the very Britishness of pantomime imbued the theatricals with a deeper collective and individual sense of national identity. As we saw in the last chapter, at Portchester Castle the genre of melodrama has a 'particular wartime significance'. By 1810, melodrama was already an established French institution enjoying enormous popularity in the boulevard theatres of Paris. Although melodrama had an unquestionably French provenance, it was also very much a genre on the move as theatres across Europe capitalised on its popularity, adopting and moulding it to their own aesthetic needs. In England, melodrama was quickly imported from the French stage, but not without considerable consequences for its cultural and national integrity.

On 13 November 1802, Thomas Holcroft's *Tale of Mystery* opened at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in London. *The Tale of Mystery* was an adaptation of Pixérécourt's *Cœlina* and was the first in a series of 'melo-drames' adapted from French originals and performed on the British stage.[2] Just a year after Holcroft's play opened, in November 1803, James Cobb's *The Wife of Two Husbands,*

[1] Emaljenow, 'Palliative Pantomimes', p. 272.

[2] Thomas Holcroft openly acknowledged the foreign provenance of his text – the first play in British theatre history to be termed a melodrama – by pointing out 'the aid [he] received from the French Drama, from which the principal incidents, many of the thoughts, and much of the manner of telling the story, are derived'. The success of this play, acted 'about 37 times' in its initial run, contributed to popularizing the French term *mélo-drame* (usually spelt 'melo-drame') as the customary denomination for this type of entertainment in early nineteenth-century Britain. See John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, 10 vols (Bath: H. E. Carrington, 1832) VII, p. 578.

adapted from Pixérécourt's *La Femme à deux maris* (1802) premiered at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. These two melo-drames are but a glimpse of the many plays adapted for the British stage from French originals throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Indeed, French drama was so widespread and influential in Britain that theatre historian Allardyce Nicoll provided sizeable lists of foreign adaptations in tragedy and comedy for the period 1750-1800.[3] Similarly, for the first half of the nineteenth century, he noted that the French influence was so pervasive that '[f]ully one-half of the plays written between 1800 and 1850 must have been suggested by Parisian models, and many were literally adapted by English authors'.[4] The vast majority of these plays were melodramas or melodramatic adaptations of French originals.[5]

The overwhelming popularity of imported French melodrama on the British stage in the first decade of the nineteenth-century created what Diego Saglia calls an 'intense cultural and ideological instability', resulting in the paramount anxiety 'of losing one's national and cultural identity through collective cultural amnesia abetted by a deluge of foreign entertainments'.[6] It was into this milieu of 'intense cultural and ideological instability' that the French prisoners arrived at Portchester Castle in July 1810, and began performing popular Pixérécourt melodramas, not to mention their own hand-written melodramas, to local British audiences. At a time when all travel between Britain and France was terminated, these theatricals provide a rare and unique glimpse into the relationship between British and French theatres.

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[3] Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*, 6 vols, Vol. 4: *Early Nineteenth Century Drama, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 59-73, 117-24.
[4] Nicoll, *History,* p. 79.
[5] On melodrama as both imported and indigenous see Jeffrey N. Cox, 'The Death of Tragedy; or, the Birth of Melodrama', in *The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatre's History*, ed. Tracy C. Davis and Peter Holland (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 164; Iounia Pipina, *Casting Identities: French Melodramas on the London Stage, 1802-1822* (Thesis: University of Bristol, 2001)
[6] Diego Saglia, 'Continental Trouble: The Nationality of Melodrama and the National Stage in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *The Melodramatic Moment (1790-1820)*, ed. Katherine Hambridge and Jonathan Hicks (Chicago: Chicago University Press, forthcoming 2018).

The previous century saw a fraught but dynamic interchange between British and French theatres. As Katherine Newey remarks, throughout the long eighteenth century British theatre was 'a repository for a set of largely unarticulated but nevertheless powerful ideas about national identity'.[7] In the prologue to his play, *The Mysterious Mother* (1781), Horace Walpole articulates 'powerful ideas about national identity', writing:

> From no French model breathes the muse to-night [...] Free as your country, Britons, be your scene. Our genius and cast of thinking are very different from the French and yet our theatre, which should represent manners, depends almost entirely at present on translations and copies from our neighbours. Enslaved as they are to rules and modes, still I do not doubt, but many both of their tragic and comic authors would be glad they dared to use the liberties that are secured to our stage. They are so cramped by the rigorous forms of composition, that they would think themselves greatly indemnified by an ampler latitude of thought.[8]

Walpole strikes directly at the 'rules and modes' that he suggests have enslaved French writers in the eighteenth century while at the same time celebrating 'the liberties that are secured' on the British stage. Walpole's attack of the French stage, and defence of British artistic liberties, comes at the height of a thriving discourse in the Anglo-French theatrical exchange. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, rising anxieties in Britain went far beyond the 'rules and modes' of French theatre, as it was faced with an entirely new problem—the import of melodrama on the British stage. The main problem with melodrama was a question of the genre's national provenance. Melodrama remained an inherently foreign genre, imported from a perceived political, military, cultural and ideological enemy.

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[7] Katherine Newey, 'The 1832 Selected Committee', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832,* ed. Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 142.
[8] Horace Walpole, 'Prologue to *The Mysterious Mother',* in *Five Romantic Plays, 1768-1821,* ed. Paul Baines and Edward Burns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.

Generally speaking, theatre history tends to overlook this period (1799-1815) between Britain and France, assuming that there was little or no interaction between the theatres of the two countries during this point. While it is true there was virtually no physical transfer of theatre, recent scholarship highlights that this was in fact a dynamic period wherein theatre engaged in a highly nationalistic debate about genre, history and cultural identity. Linda Colley's seminal work *Britons: Forging a Nation* set the groundwork for ideas of national identity formation during this period in which she proposes that:

> The British and the French had their teeth so sunk into each other [….] that they could neither live together peacefully, nor ignore each other and live neutrally apart…Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.[9]

Colley asserts that the British and French were competitive antagonists whose conflicting personas fuelled mutually exclusive cultural identities. The theatricals at Portchester Castle occur at a time when 'powerful ideas about national identity'[10] emerged with renewed strength at a time when Britain and France were political and military enemies. Melodrama in particular proved problematic. As Jane Moody writes, melodrama served as 'the meeting point between a rich variety of British and continental dramatic traditions', its 'foreign origins' intensifying its problematic role as a 'dangerous dramatic virus'. In this way, melodrama was a controversial point of intersection of ideas; it was at once culturally progressive, but also dangerous to the formation of national identity.[11] For an Englishman to enjoy melodrama was to admit the cultural superiority of the French 'other', and expose oneself to the dangers of the new 'dramatic virus'.

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[9] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 1-2, 5.
[10] Katherine Newey, p. 142.
[11] Jane Moody, 'The Theatrical Revolution, 1776-1843', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. 2: *1660 to 1895*, ed. Joseph Donohue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 199-215 (pp. 212-13).

These dramatic divisions were largely promolgulated by the press. The question of national identity and provenance of melodrama was the subject of a cartoon published in *The Satirist* for January 1808 entitled 'The Monster Melo-Drame'.[12] In the cartoon (see fig. 14), the monster declares: 'How I came into the world, or to whom I am indebted for my birth, appears to be a Tale of Mystery. I partake, as you see, of the combined natures of Tragedy, Comedy, and Pantomime'. The conflation or transgression of established genre boundaries was only one part of the anxiety pertaining to this 'dangerous dramatic virus'. The other part was its trans-national nature. The monster goes on to explain: 'I am occasionally visited by writers of every description and country', they in turn influence 'your countrymen, who, from some strange and unaccountable impulse, delight to imitate their foibles, immorality, and prejudices'.[13] Clearly, at some level, melodrama as an imported genre had struck a sensitive cord in Britain at both a local and national level. The Transport Board overseeing the prisoners was institutionally bound to prevent the opportunity for British countrymen to engage with or imitate the 'foibles, immorality, and prejudices' of the French prisoners. In this instance, a mixture of French theatre professionals and amateurs performed French melodrama in French to a mixed audience of French and British civilians and military. The reaction may be surprising.

The extent to which French prisoners of war in Britain stoked cultural anxieties and Francophobic sentiments is debatable. What we find, however, are divisions in Britain between local civilian interactions, and central institutional controls. For the most part, it is clear that ineractions between foreign French prisoners and local civilians were anything but competitive and antagonistic, while the Transport Board is consistently enforcing a division line between the two sides.

Central institutional anxieties at the Transport Board are understandable, given that 7,000 Frenchmen were being housed within close proximity to a large

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[12] For an analysis of the print, see Jeffrey N. Cox and Michael Gamer, Introduction to *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Michael Gamer (Peterborough: Broadview, 2003), x-xi.

[13] 'The Monster Melo-Drame', *The Satirist, or, Monthly Meteor,* 1 (January 1808), pp. 340-41.

naval port. Portchester Castle was located on the outskirts of a metropolitan area that housed over 40,000 British civilians in 1811 and was also the base of a major naval port.[14] Patricia Crimmin points out that all prisoners of war were 'a potential source of trouble and a strain on local resources'.[15] As a result, prisoners were indeed often perceived as 'aliens and sometimes were hated and feared as traditional or ideological enemies and potential invaders. Or they were seen as consumers of scarce food, cared for by the government while the native population suffered'.[16] While Crimmin's point may be relevant to certain port communities, all evidence from the interactions at Portchester Castle points to a mutual cultural curiosity and respect between prisoners, prison staff and the local population.

When we look more closely at the relationship between captors and captives at Portchester Castle, we find a general feeling of mutual understanding and respect. In the theatre, this mutual cultural respect took several manifestations. Far from being 'ideological enemies and potential invaders', the French prisoners seem to have taken considerable steps to incorporate and ingratiate their captors, and the local civilian population. In January 1811, when the prison agent and overseer, Captain William Paterson was redirected from Portchester Castle to take up command of HMS Puissant, the prisoners arranged for a series of *divertissements* in his honour.[17] On New Year's Day 1811, the theatre *sociétaires* wrote and presented a short divertissement, *The Heart's New Year Gift*, in honour of Captain Paterson and his wife.[18] In a show of gratitude they proclaim: 'in this happy day, let this place who with nothing but mirth feel accents, let everyone united in songs to celebrate the favours conferred upon us'. This proclamation is followed by a scene of 'dancers with garlands' who hold up the Cyphers of C.W. Paterson'. '[F]rom under the stage' a banner rises with the words 'Long live Paterson' while a sign is dropped from above with the words:

[14] Parish Registers for 15 June 1811 indicate: Portsmouth, males 2,887, females 4,216: Portsea, males 15,450, females 18,005. Source: Parish Registers, Hampshire County Archives, Winchester, Hants.
[15] Patricia Crimmin, 'Prisoners of War and British Port Communities, 1793-1815', *The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du nord*, 6 (1996), 17-27 (p. 1).
[16] Crimmin, p. 24.
[17] V&A: THM /415/2/18.
[18] V&A: THM/415/1/7.

'We this day offer our grateful hearts to our generous benefactors'. Captain Paterson was perhaps one of the first officials in their entire journey from the Battle of Bailen to show the French prisoners any kindness in not only allowing them to stage theatricals at Portchester Castle, but also in providing the raw materials to aid their endeavour. Paterson was replaced by a new agent, Captain Lock, who seems to show similar sympathy and support for the prisoners' theatre project. Lock may have been supportive, but he was still under the central command of the Transport Board, which was not always sympathetic to the prisoners' theatricals.

Within weeks of its creation in September 1810, the prison theatre at Portchester Castle had begun to attract positive attention. According to Gille, the theatre hosted the director of the King's Theatre of nearby Portsmouth. 'Il fut surpris de tout ce qu'il vit; après nous avoir fait beaucoup de compliments, il se retira' ['He was surprised at everything he saw, and after having paid us many compliments, he left'.] Gille indicates that the inclusion of the English audience was in fact born out of a need to impress and dazzle. In particular, Carré wanted to impress the English audience with his talent.[19] If that was his aim, he certainly succeeded. Praise was forthcoming. On Monday, 7th January 1811 the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that:

> The French Prisoners at Portchester have fitted up a Theatre in the Castle, which they have decorated in a style far surpassing anything of the kind that could possibly be expected […] It is no exaggeration of their merit to say, that the Pantomimes which they have brought forward, are not excelled by those performed in London.[20]

Having published the review in the 7th January issue of the *Hampshire Telegraph* it is entirely likely that the reviewer attended Portchester Castle on Friday 5th January 1811.[21] There are a number of key issues in this review and playbill that deserve critical attention. Indeed, I believe that this theatrical event

[19] Gille, pp. 267-68.
[20] *Hampshire Telegraph,* 7 January 1811, p. 3.
[21] The last recorded performance before this is Friday, 5 January 1811.

on 5th January 1811 is highly significant. Not only is it one of the few documented instances of a French theatre performance in Britain during the entire Napoleonic Wars (1803-1814), it is also imbued with a deep sense of cultural exchange, mutual respect, and appreciation.

First, it provides some indication that the prisoners' description of their theatre is somewhat accurate. The reviewer indicates that the theatre is 'decorated in a style far surpassing anything of the kind that could possibly be expected'. This suggests that Carré's designs and decorations were actually quite advanced. Secondly, the review draws our attention to the 'merit' of the theatricals and highlights that they are not excelled by those performed in London'.[22] This is an important point. At a time when theatre was a 'repository for national identity', a British review exalting French theatricals in Britain is a surprising and unexpected step away from our understanding of the British and French as cultural rivals and antagonists, and is certainly in contrast to perceptions of French theatre (particularly melodrama) that is being disseminated in the British press. However, evidence suggests that the cultural exchange, respect, and appreciation was mutual.

The playbill for the 5 January 1811 indicates a performance of the one-act comedy, *The Mistake,* followed by a one-act vaudeville, *The Genteel Cobler,*[23] 'to which will be added *The Golden Apple* pantomime in three acts'.[24] While we have no abstract, description, or surviving script for either *The Mistake* or *The Golden Apple,* an abstract survives for a one-act vaudeville, *The Gallant Cobbler*. The vaudeville performed at Portchester Castle may be the same or a variation of *Le galant savetier* (1805) by Saint-Firmin that opened at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris. A short abstract written by the prisoners in broken-English summarises the play:

> Dutranchet a cobbler, a married man, leaves his wife and courts two fish women, who have each a beau, and are determined to make themselves merry at the cobbler's expense. He writes a love letter to one of them and

[22] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 7 January 1811, 587, p. 3.
[23] Saint-Firmin, *Le Galant savetier* [*The Gallant Cobbler*, 1805].
[24] THM /415/2/18.

> when both are busy in reading it they are detected by the two lovers who make a noise, and want to read the letter. The cobbler's wife comes and to punish him for his infidelity beats and abuses him as he was coming to dinner with the fish women. After giving vent to her rage, they make a peace and the [two] fish women marry their beaux.

A short, comical caricature of the speech and mannerisms of the lower classes, *The Gallant Cobbler,* fits neatly into what one of the earlier historians of vaudeville classes as 'poissard' pieces dealing with the life of the lower classes of Paris. The 'genre poissard' of the eighteenth century had a strong influence on the lighter genres, entertaining audiences by depicting, often in caricature, the speech and mannerisms of the lower classes. The emphasis in the majority of poissard pieces was on the portrayal of characters and speech rather than plot.

In their description on the playbill, the prisoners describe *The Gallant Cobbler* as 'a vaudeville in the Billingsgate style'. In his *Dictionary in the Vulgar Tongue* (1811), Francis Grose defines Billingsgate languages as 'Foul language, or abuse. Billingsgate is the market where the fish-women assemble to purchase fish; and where, in their dealings and disputes, they are somewhat apt to leave decency and good manners a little on the left hand'.[25] There are viable similarities between the Billingsgate and *genre poissard*. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 5th Edition (1798) describes poissard as 'le langage et les moeurs du plus bas peuple' ['the language and mannners of common people'], while the *Dictionnaire universel des littératures* (1876) describes the genre poissard 'où grands seigneurs et grandes dames s'appliquaient à imiter le langage et l'accent que le poète était allé étudier aux halles et dans les guinguettes. C'était la nature prise sur le fait, dans les classes les plus grossières du peuple de Paris' ['where great lords and ladies imitated the language and accents that the poet had studied in the market halls and in the taverns. It was nature caught in the act amongst the lowest classes of people in Paris']. The 'langage et l'accent' of 'les classes les plus grossières du peuple de Paris'[26] had in fact entertained polite

[25] Francis Grose, *Dictionary in the Vulgar Tongue* (London: [s.n.], 1811).
[26] *Dictionnaire universel des littératures* (1876) p. 1621.

Parisian society in the eighteenth century with one comic troupe invited by Marie Antoinette to bring the *genre poissard* to Versailles.[27]

Evidence suggests that the English shared a similar fascination with the fish-sellers of Billingsgate in London. Although the Billingsgate dialect never formally materialised into a genre in the way the *poissard* had in Paris, it was nevertheless used to entertain the nobility.[28] At Brandenburgh House, in 1794, the Margavine of Anspach gave a special performance of *Les Poissardes Angloises*.[29] The short afterpiece was allegedly based on an actual incident that happened when some French *émigrés* went to Billingsgate Fish Market to buy fish cheaply, and the fishwomen not only loaded them with their wares for nothing but raised a subscription for their relief.[30]As the fishwoman Poll sings:

> I'm a Billingsgate girl—'tis an odd sort of name,
> And my eyes are as black as a coal;
> My frankness of heart gives me looks that are game—
> But you'll find I'm a good little soul.
> Who'll buy, who'll buy?
> Who'll buy of this good little soul?[31]

The fact that the playbill informs us that the play will be performed in 'Billingsgate style' is revealing. The Billingsgate style is an inherently British, particularly London, phenomenon. Whether or not the prisoners mastered the Billingsgate dialect is irrelevant. The fact that they have labelled the play in a British style suggests at the very least an inclination to reach a cultural commonground. Rather than boastfully declaring the superiority of French

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[27] The langage et l'accent of the *poissard* in these plays was artificial, just like dialects in Molière's plays. See Alexander Parks Moore, *The 'Genre Poissard' and the French Stage of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).
[28] In France, Queen Marie-Antoinette performed *genre poissard* at Versailles.
[29] See Sybil Rosenfeld, *The Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700-1820* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1978), pp. 63-4.
[30] See *The Times,* 21 July 1794; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 19-22 July 1794.
[31] Op. cit. Rosenfeld, *The Temples of Thespis*, pp. 63-4.

language or theatre as might be expected, the French prisoners have effectively adapted their theatricals to a British audience in a British style.

On 5 January 1811, it appears that the *société* at Portchester Castle adapted their theatricals toward British tastes, bending their own understanding and tradition of pantomime to meet the needs and expectations of their British audience. Whether or not the play text adhered to British aesthetics and form of pantomime is difficult to determine (although the review seemed to readily identify the theatricals as pantomimes and to praise them quite highly), the very fact that the French appear to be extending an interest toward British sensibility is unique and significant.

Rather than infecting the local audience with a 'dangerous dramatic virus', the French prisoners appear to be extending an olive branch through the theatricals. Although short-lived, this single theatrical event demonstrates that prisoner-of-war theatre served to bridge divides between two supposedly adverse cultures tied together by a shared theatrical heritage. Exalting French theatricals at a time when theatre was a 'repository for national identity' may not have helped the plight of the prisoners. Indeed, the reviewer's exaltations appear to have been at odds with the official stance of the Transport Board. The attention and public notoriety lavished on the theatricals of the French prisoners at Portchester Castle proved detrimental to their endeavours. On 28th January 1811, approximately two weeks after the review in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, the Transport Board wrote to Captain Lock enquiring 'whether the Prisoners in your custody are in the habit of performing plays, and, if so, by what authority, as the Board neither have given nor can give such permission?'[32] Two days later, on 30th January 1811, the Transport Office replied demanding to know 'whether any of the neighbouring inhabitants or strangers are, or have been, admitted to the theatrical representations of the prisoners, and whether any and what sum has been paid for admission?'[33] Finally, on the 1st February 1811, the Transport Board wrote to inform Captain Lock 'that all theatrical representations must be immediately stopped, and not again permitted on any account whatever, as they

[32] Letter from TO to Captain Lock dated 28th January 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.
[33] Letter from TO to Captain Lock dated 30th January 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.

are contrary to law, and we have no power to suffer the same nor if we had could we sanction the like at Portchester, where it is prohibited at all the other Depots'.[34]

Ostenisbly the Transport Board give their justification that the theatricals 'are contrary to law',[35] which is a perfectly justifiable reason considering that the Theatre Licensing Act of 1737, which effectively excluded any theatrical performances except for those holding a royal patent. The reason for the Admiralty's sudden detection of the theatricals at Portchester Castle is unclear. However, according to Quantin, the negative reaction from the Admiralty was born out of jealousy. 'Le motif de leur jalousie était le grand nombre d'Anglais qui venaient de Portsmouth même à notre théâtre, et vantaient beaucoup la supériorité de nos décors' ['the motive of their jealous was the great number of Englishmen who came from Portsmouth to our theatre, and boasted of the superiority of our decorations'.][36] Gille also writes that same English reviewer wrote to the director of the Portsmouth Theatre Royal.

> Il engageait M. le directeur du grand théâtre de Portsmouth à venir auprès des prisonniers français apprendre à diriger un théâtre. Ce directeur, piqué au vif, vint avec une nombreuse société visiter notre théâtre, il fut surpris de tout ce qu'il vit; après nous avoir fait beaucoup de compliments, il se retira.
>
> [He urged the director of the theatre in Portsmouth to come and learn from the French prisoners how to run a theatre. This director, needled by this, came to visit our theatre with a number of other people. He was surprised at everything he saw, and after having paid us many compliments, he left.]

A week or so later the Transport Board wrote to Captain Lock to shut down the theatre. Both Quantin and Gille write that they were aware of the

[34] Letter from TO to Captain Lock dated 1st February 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.
[35] Letter from TO to Captain Lock dated 1st February 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.
[36] Quantin, II, p. 137.

article in the press praising their theatricals. At the same time, they both seem to imply that the director of the Portsmouth theatre was jealous of the prisoners' theatricals, or threatened by local competition, and wrote the Transport Board to get them shut down.

The letter from the Transport Board of 30th January 1811, first seeks to clarify 'whether any and what sum has been paid for admission?'[37] It will be noted that the *Hampshire Telegraph* review makes no mention that the audiences 'paid for admission'. Did the Board assume that audiences were charged admission or was it informed by another source such as the director of the Portsmouth Theatre whose primary concern would be box office takings? The overriding concern expressed by the Transport Board does not appear to be the fact that 'neighbouring inhabitants or strangers' had been admitted to the theatre contrary to the law. The real issue at hand seems to be that the invited audience had been charged admission, thus making the Théätre des Variétés a commercial venture, and a potential rival to other theatre companies in the region. Although we have no documentary evidence to support the claim that the director of the Portsmouth theatre visited the theatre and/or wrote to the Transport Board, we do know that Portchester Castle, the prisoners, and their theatre was located precicely in the middle of a fiercely competitive theatrical battlefield between the Portsmouth Theatre Royal and its rival just across the solent, the Gosport Theatre. The arrival of a new theatre company into this milieu would most likely have been seen as unwelcome competition, and no doubt efforts were made to shut it down as soon as possible.

The Portsmouth Theatre Royal was built in 1761 was situated in the High Street, and was managed by Thomas Collins. The theatre was made famous in Charles Dickens's novel *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39, see fig. 16) with the fictional Vincent Crummles's company performs there. James Winston's *The Theatric Tourist* (1805, see fig. 17) tells us that: 'Neither the external nor internal appearance of the house entitles it to much consideration; and as so much money has been made here in time of war, we think the public have a right to expect a share of the emoluments to be expended in embellishment'. Nevertheless, he

[37] Letter from TO to Captain Lock dated 30th January 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.

mentions that 'the company is truly respectable, a sample of which may be seen on the boards of Drury Lane'.[38] In 1796, Henry Thornton had created a theatre on the High Street in Gosport, and thus a fierce competition was born between the two theatres that reached to every aspect of theatrical life. When the *Hampshire Chronicle* reported of the newly built Gosport Theatre, 'so complete and elegant a little theatre we never remember to have seen',[39] Collins rapidly upgraded the lobby of the Portsmouth Theatre extending the boxes and decorating the interior.[40]

Throughout the late-1790s and early-1800s, both Portsmouth Theatre Royal and Gosport Theatre squared off in a fierce competition. Both theatre managers fought for the best actors, plays, vying for limited audiences of local sailors, merchant shipmen and local aristocracy. Each theatre strove to have the best facilities, the biggest theatrical entertainments with the best actors performing the newest hits of the age such as Sheridan's *Pizarro* (1799). The two theatres were so competitive for audiences that the theatres frequently advertised in local papers that, 'Boats will attend for the convenience of persons who wish to cross the water'.[41] In the midst of this fiercely competitive theatrical microcosm based around Portsmouth Harbour, it is not surprising that either Collins or Thornton would have been eager to shut down a theatre that encroached on this hotly contested terrain or presented a potential competition or threat to their own economic sustainability.

The theatre *société* at Portchester Castle was fortunate that their new overseer, Captain Lock, like his predecessor, demonstrated compassion towards their plight. Two months after the termination of the theatricals at Portchester Castle, Captain Lock wrote to the Transport Office requesting that the prisoners' 'Theatrical Representations' be allowed to resume. On 23 March 1811, the Transport Board replied that 'there is no objection to their being allowed to having amusements in the Prison, to which no Persons shall be admitted

[38] James Winston, *The Theatric Tourist* (London: Society for Theatre Research/British Library, 2008), p. 34.
[39] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 19 November 1796.
[40] *Portsmouth Gazette*, 21 and 28 November 1796.
[41] Paul Ranger, 'The Rivals: Two Georgian Theatre Managers', *Hampshire Field Club and Archaelogical Society*, 43 (1987), 219-235 (p. 231).

excepting their fellow Prisoners; but particular care is to be taken that no Strangers or Persons belonging to the Establishment or Guard be admitted either for money or otherwise'.[42] The theatricals were therefore allowed to recommence in April 1811.

From this correspondence we might gather that economics and legality might not be the only factors that lead to the closure of the prisoner-of-war theatre at Portchester Castle. It appears that the problem was not necessarily the theatrical representations themselves that threatened the Transport Board, but was instead the integration between prisoners and 'Strangers or Persons belonging to the Establishment or Guard' that caused the disturbance.[43] This suggests a defined strategy within the Transport Board to identify and separate French 'otherness' from British institutions in all its manifestations.

Patricia Crimmin rightly points out that the authorities feared contacts between the populace and prisoners, partly out of fear that it might foster republican, or pro-French sympathies. One guard at Portchester Castle later wrote: 'Whatever grounds of boasting may belong to us as a nation […] I am afraid that our mode of dealing with the prisoners taken from the French during the war scarcely deserves to be classed among them. Absolute cruelties were never, I believe, perpetrated on those unfortunate beings'.[44]

Additionally, Marc Baer underlines the links between theatre and disorder in the period that would have irrevocably been in the awareness of the Transport Board. Less than a year before the French prisoners began arriving at Portchester Castle, the Old Price Riots erupted at Covent Garden Theatre in London.[45] To the Transport Board, theatre presented a potentially dangerous space where these 'cultural and ideological instabilities' could easily destabilize into disorder, posing a critical threat to the delicate social and economic ecology of the local community.

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[42] Letter from TO to Captain Lock, 23 March 1811, TNA: ADM 98/252.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Gleig, p. 42.
[45] Marc Baer, *Theatre and Disorder in late-Georgian London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Gillian Russell, 'Playing at Revolution: The Politics of the O.P. Riots of 1809', *Theatre Notebook*, 44 (1990), 16-26.

The ‘cultural and ideological instability’ highlighted by Saglia along with Colley’s assertion of a divisive confrontation with a ‘hostile Other’, exists primarily at the institutional level, that is, with the Transport Board and the Theatre Royal Portsmouth. At the local level, however, we find a much different picture. Far from instability and confrontation, we find mutual respect and engagement. Instead of cultural antagonism, we find a group of French men performing French plays to receptive and congratulatory English audiences.

Ultimately, this is about much more than a tale of prisoners performing theatre in order to ‘pass the time’. For the prisoners at Portchester Castle, theatre was much more than mere entertainment, it was a way of life, a mode of survival providing the necessary distraction from the ennui of captivity. The fact that their mode of survival engaged with and drew praise from the very people who held the keys to the prison gate is a remarkable testament to the ability of both sides to accommodate a cross-cultural dialogue in such extreme and testing circumstances. Above all, the French prisoner of war theatricals staged at Portchester Castle between 1810 and 1814 represent two cultures, divided by military, political and ideological warfare, coming together in a damp room of a castle on the south coast of England to bridge cultural divides and attempt to understand one another by engaging in an enjoyable night of theatre.

PART III

PRISONERS ON PAROLE AND THEIR THEATRICALS

CHAPTER 10

PERFORMING IN THE PROVINCES
French Officers on Parole in Britain

Prisoners on Parole

Between 1803 and 1814, Britain housed an estimated 122,000 French prisoners of war.[1] In Britain, prisoners of war fell into one of two categories. The rank and file consisted of all prisoners ranking as non-commissioned officers or below. These prisoners were housed in land depots such as Portchester Castle, Dartmoor or Norman Cross, or on the crowded prison hulks, or *pontons,* such as those in Portsmouth Harbour or Chatham. On the other hand, commissioned officers in the French navy, officers of the most senior rank from captured merchant ships or privateers were often granted parole and were sent to specified towns and villages in designated towns across Britain (including Wales and Scotland), upon giving a written undertaking not to attempt to escape.[2]

Between 1796 and 1814, there were over sixty designated parole towns scattered across England, Scotland, and Wales.[3] Upon arriving in Britain, the

[1] Statistic quoted in Francis Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815: A Record of their Lives, their Romance and their Sufferings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 43; see also Michael Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 53. General histories of Napoleonic prisoners-of-war on parole in Britain include: Roy Bennett, 'French Prisoners of War on Parole in Britain, 1803 to 1814' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1964); Gary D. Brown, 'Prisoner of War Parole: Ancient Concept, Modern Utility', *Military Law* Review, 156 (1998), 200–23; Paul Chamberlain, *Hell Upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain, 1793-1815* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2008); Ian Macdougall, *All Men Are Brethren: Prisoners of War in Scotland during the Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1814* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008); and Renaud Morieux, 'French Prisoners of War: Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783', *Historical Journal*, 56 (2013), 55-88.

[2] These divisions were not rigidly enforced. Broadly speaking, a further division existed between naval prisoners and army prisoners. Naval prisoners were generally kept together. See Gary D. Brown, 'Prisoner of war parole: ancient concept, modern utility', *Military Law Review*, 156 (1998), 200–23.

[3] The population of parole prisoners in each town varied considerably. Between 1803 and 1811, for instance, Tiverton in Devon was home to 667 prisoners, while Thame saw 422 'foreign gentlemen' during the period 1803 to 1814, source: General Entry Books for Parole Depots: TNA: ADM 103/572, 601, 606, 607, 608. Not all parole towns had

paroled prisoners signed an undertaking to abide by the parole regulations and not attempt to escape.[4] Having signed this agreement, the paroled officer would be issued with a passport to his town of residence, with instructions to travel to the town upon a certain date and by a specific route, with the journey being made at his own expense. The prisoners in each parole town were under the care and protection of an agent appointed by the Transport Board, usually a local squire or magistrate, and on arrival at the depot, a prisoner would report to the designated Agent. Officers were given an allowance of 1s 6d per day and from this they had to pay for their lodgings, food and clothing, and in most cases they were allowed to draw upon funds in France.[5]

Unlike the rank and file, these officers on parole were given a degree of freedom and flexibility. In these towns and villages they lived in civilian lodgings, although subject to nightly curfew and restriction on their movements to within a mile or so of the town. For cultural historians, paroled prisoners of war provide a useful lens to magnify and observe social and cultural intermediaries between French and English societies.[6] In the words of Renaud Morieux, these 'captivity zones' serve as 'places of intermingling, a social laboratory, where people of different status would socialize. These spaces accordingly provided a lens through which to glimpse the repercussions of international conflicts at the level of local communities, small towns, and villages'.[7] Unlike the rank and file prisoners detained in the designated prison depots or hulks, the prisoners on parole interacted directly with the local British

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entry books or registers, however, including Selkirk. For a complete list of parole towns in Britain see Chamberlain, pp. 116-119.

[4] This 'Certificate issued to Parole Prisoners' stipulated that the prisoner 'has liberty to walk' not more than one mile from the designated parole town, 'nor be absent from his lodgings after five o'clock in the afternoon, during the months of November, December, and January; and after seven o'clock in the months of February, March, April, September, and October; or after eight o'clock in the months of May, June, and July; nor quit his lodgings in the morning until the bell rings at six o'clock'. Source: TNA: ADM 105/62.

[5] Chamberlain, p. 122.

[6] See Renaud Morieux, 'French prisoners of war: conflicts of honour and social inversions in England, 1744-1783', *Historical Journal*, 56 (2013), 55-88, and Mark Towsey, 'Imprisoned reading: French Prisoners of War at the Selkirk Subscription Library', in *Civilians and Wars in Europe, 1618-1815*, ed. Erica Charters et. al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 241-61.

[7] Morieux, p. 58.

community. Officers were often invited to the homes of local gentry, attended balls and other social events.

Surviving playbills indicate that French officers were performing in at least three separate parole towns across Great Britain including the towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire, and Selkirk and Kelso in the Scottish Borders. In this chapter we will examine this evidence in greater detail, first exploring each parole town individually before analysing the repertoire as a whole to gain a better picture of Anglo-French cultural relations on a more local and personal level, nuancing pre-existing notions of the Anglo-French cultural relationship.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

In 1802 Napoleon sent an expedition of 15,000 troops under General Rochambeau to the West Indies to subdue the inhabitants of San Domingo who had revolted against the rule of the French.[8] After the collapse of the Peace of Amiens in 1803, the French ships were captured by the British fleet and the French were made prisoners-of-war. A considerable number of these prisoners ended up on parole in the small Leicestershire market town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.[9]

In *The State of the Poor* (1797), Sir Frederick Morton Eden estimated the parish of Ashby-de-la-Zouch as 11,200 acres with 484 dwellings, and a population of 2,500.[10] Records from 1800 show that the village had a population of approximately 2,600, and by 1811 that population had risen to approximately 3,141.[11] The village was the site of the Norman-built Ashby Castle later made famous in Walter Scott's historic adventure novel, *Ivanhoe* (1819). By the early nineteenth century the castle was a mere ruin on the edge of town. In 1721,

[8] Arthur Crane and Kenneth Hillier, *Napoleonic Prisoners of War in Ashby-de-la-Zouch* (Ashby-de-la-Zouch: Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum, 1999), p. 9.
[9] Crane and Hillier, p. 10; Register of Prisoners on Parole at Ashby-de-la-Zouch is held at TNA: ADM 103/555, no. 47044.
[10] Sir Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor* (London: J. Davis, 1797), p. 374.
[11] Eden cites that in 1800 there were 614 hours with population of 2,675 while in 1811 that number had climbed to 638 houses with population of 3,141.

Ashby Place was built as the home of the Hastings family. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, moved there soon after the death of her husband in 1746. After Selina's death in June 1791, Ashby Place was let and used partly as offices for the Ashby Canal Company, partly as Assembly Rooms, which would later be used as a theatre for the French prisoners of war in 1810.[12]

On 21 September 1804, approximately 40 French officers arrived in Ashby from Oldiham in the south of England, 27 of these were Army officers who had been taken in the West Indies in San Domingo, La Caille and Port au Prince.[13] The other thirteen were officers of ships captured in various actions. Forty more Frenchmen were sent to Ashby from Portsmouth arriving on 4 November 1804. The prisoners in Ashby were under the care and control of the Transport Board's agent, a local grocer Joseph Farnell. Farnell was responsible for the housing and general supervision of the French prisoners on parole in Ashby, and his register shows a total of 177 prisoners under his care.[14]

A surviving playbill (see fig. 18) indicates that on 29th March 1810, the 'Gentlemen French Officers, Prisoners of War at Ashby-de-la-Zouch' erected a Society Theatre in the Assembly Room at Ashby where they would perform Voltaire's three-act tragedy *La Mort de César* (*The Death of Cesar,* 1735), followed by Molière's one-act comedy *Les Précieuses ridicules* (*The Ridiculous Coquettes*, 1659).[15] These entertainments were followed on 3 May 1810 with Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui* (*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, 1666) and *Les Précieuses ridicules* along with Gouffé and Duval's one-act *Garrick double, ou les Deux acteurs anglais* (*The Two Garricks*, 1800).

The playbill also indicates that 'Ladies and Gentlemen of this place and neighbourhood' were invited, however, we have no records that indicate how many actually attended the performances, although the note at the bottom seems

[12] Crane and Hillier, p. 13; Ashby Place was demolished in 1829.
[13] See Joseph Farnell's Register of Prisoners on Parole at Ashby-de-la-Zouch is held at TNA: ADM 103/555, no. 47044.
[14] Register of Prisoners on Parole at Ashby-de-la-Zouch is held at TNA: ADM 103/555, no. 47044.
[15] Playbill, 29th March 1810, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum.

to suggest that there was more than one performance.[16] There does appear to be some confusion about the legality of the theatrical representations. It would appear that either the prisoners had not informed Farnell, or that he was unsure whether or not theatrical representations by French officers on parole were allowed. On 27 March 1810, Farnell wrote to the Transport Board to enquire whether or not it is permissible for them to do so, and on the 30 March, the Board replied:

> 'Sir, I am directed by the Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 27th inst., and in return to acquaint you that this department cannot interfere respecting the prisoners under your care performing plays, as permission for them to do so can only be allowed by the Secretary of State'.[17]

There is no evidence that Farnell ever wrote to the Secretary of State to seek permission. It would appear that the theatricals were allowed to continue as we have evidence of a playbill advertising performances on 3 May 1810. Over a year later, 8 October 1811, the Transport Board circulated to agents at parole towns:

> 'Having understood that Theatrical Representations have been exhibited by the French officers at many of the parole towns where they are detailed, it is our duty to inform you that we have never approved of or allowed theatrical Representations at any of the Depots under our charge, nor is it consonant with the Laws of this Realm, that any Foreigners should institute such unauthorised Exhibitions whose Tendency may be Dangerous in political or licentious Principle, and may occasionally and improperly draw together some of His Majesty's Subjects to attend them. If, therefore, these Theatrical Representations are not immediately put a

[16] The note reads: 'All Tickets must be sent in every night as there will be fresh ones for every play'. See Playbill, 29th March 1810, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum.
[17] Cited in Crane and Hillier, p. 19.

> Stop to, we shall be under the Necessity of removing the Prisoners at…[blank] to some other Depot without Delay'.[18]

This notice suggests that theatre was taking place 'at many of the parole towns' and it underlines certain institutional anxieties that the prisoner of war theatricals may be 'Dangerous in political or licentious Principle', and wish to terminate all contact between the French prisoners, their theatricals and His Majesty's Subjects who may be 'improperly' drawn to them. Clearly there had been enough concern over prisoner-of-war theatricals for the central administration to issue this decree.

Parole Prisoners in Scotland

At first paroled officers were held in a series of small towns along the south coast including Oldiham, Bishop's Waltham and Alresford.[19] However, with the resumption of war in 1803, the Transport Office began moving French commissioned officers further up the country toward the Midlands, to towns and villages such as Chesterfield, Leek and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and eventually to Wales and Scotland.[20] By the year 1804, the land depots across Britain were gradually beginning to fill with prisoners of war.

For most of the Napoleonic Wars, Scotland had avoided an influx of French prisoners of war. Between 1804 and the end of 1810 the town of Greenlaw remained the only prisoner of war depot, and Peebles the only parole town, in Scotland.[21] Even as late as 1810 there had been at most only about 600

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[18] Circular, 8 October 1811, TNA: ADM 98/170.

[19] See Barbara Biddell, *Napoleonic Prisoners of War In & Around Bishop's Waltham* (Barnham, West Sussex: Two Plus George, 2007); Audrey Deacon, *The Prisoner from Perrecy: The Story of One of Napoleon's Officers who Died in Hampshire* (Harpenden: A. Deacon, 1988).

[20] See Roy Bennett, 'French Prisoners of War on Parole in Britain, 1803 to 1814' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1964).

[21] See MacDougall, p. 38. In May 1804, a year after the resumption of war, a Transport Office list showed a total then of 6,188 prisoners of war in Britain, of whom 5,663 were confined in depots or on hulks and 525 were on parole. Of those 6,188 prisoners only 73 were shown to be then in Scotland: 64 at Greenlaw, and nine on parole at Peebles. The list is in NAS, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/2/783.

or 700 prisoners of war at any one time in Scotland, but between the end of 1810 and summer 1812 three new depots and one former depot were opened and fourteen new parole towns established north of the Border. By August 1811, according to the Transport Board, the number of captives in Scotland had increased about fivefold to 3,350 and of these 2,744 were in confined depots while the other 606 were on parole.[22] In the three years from 1811 the total prisoner-of-war population in Scotland reached approximately 13,000 or 14,000. It has been estimated that in March 1810 out of all the prisoners of war in Britain only 0.05 per cent were in Scotland, but by May 1814 that percentage had increased to 17.6. In the same period the percentage of parole prisoners in Scotland was estimated to have increased from 1.1 per cent to 25 per cent.[23]

Auld Alliances

Formal relations between Scotland and France date back to the Auld Alliance of 1295 (Scots for 'Old Alliance'; *Vieille Alliance* in French), an alliance between the kingdoms of Scotland and France in the form of a treaty signed by John Balliol and Philip IV of France against Edward I of England. The alliance played a significant role in the relations between Scotland, France and England from its beginning in 1295 to the 1560 Treaty of Edinburgh which replaced the Auld Alliance with a new Anglo-Scottish accord.[24]

Officially, the Act of Union of 1707 brought Scotland and England together in the formation of the United Kingdom. However, as many historians

[22] Letter from TO to J. Beckett, 26 August 1811, TNA: HO 28/40.

[23] The totals for the years to 1810 are based on the lists in the General Entry Books for the Edinburgh bridewell, Greenlaw and Peebles; those from 1811 on the two latter and on the Entry Books for the new depots and parol towns. A Transport Board list dated 4 August 1812 in TNA: HO 42/126 fol. 164B, gives as at 30 July, that year a grand total of 49,629 prisoners in depots and hulks in Britain, of whom 5,620 (11.1 per cent) were in confined depots in Scotland (640 at Greenlaw; 4,980 at Valleyfield). In addition, the list shows there were then in Britain 3,356 parole prisoners, of whom 1,305 (38.9 per cent) were in 12 parole towns in Scotland. Francis Abell estimated that in 1814 there was a total of 72,000 prisoners of war in Britain, with spare capacity for holding almost 10,000 more—i.e. up to 45,000 in land depots, 35000 on hulks, and 2,000 on parole, see Abell, p.118.

[24] Elizabeth Bonner, 'Scotland's Auld Alliance with France, 1295-1560', *History*, 84 (2002), 5–30.

have pointed out, the subsequent relationship between the two countries has been anything but straight-forward with a series of Jacobite Rebellions and radical uprisings throughout the eighteenth century.[25] The French Revolution complicated the relationship between France and Scotland. While some historians argue that the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Wars served further to unite England and Scotland, others claim that they provided necessary fuel for radicals in Scotland to rise up against what they viewed as English imperialism north of the border.[26]

Ian Brown points out that religion dictated a great deal of Scotland's national identity throughout much of the 1700s, a period that saw the church and theatre at odds with one another.[27] Royal patents controlled licensing for theatres issued by the crown, but in Scotland, the Kirk held considerable sway over the theatre and its repertoire. By 1662, however, the Scottish nobility patronised the Tennis Court Theatre in the grounds of Holyroodhouse, protecting it from Church or civic hostility. Although religious controls over Scottish theatre had waned considerably by the early 1800s, elements of intolerance remained. When the parole officers of Kelso invited local minister, George Lawson, to their performances, they received a frosty response. 'Is it customary in France for ministers to go to the theatre?' he wrote. 'There are some who do, and some who do not', was the reply. 'Well', said he, 'it is the same in this country, and I am one of those who do not'.[28] The French parole theatricals at Kelso had unwittingly crossed a sensitive social boundary.

By the early nineteenth century, Scotland was beginning to develop its own unique national theatre. In 1767, an Act granting Edinburgh Corporation powers to build a new Town Hall included a clause 'to enable His Majesty to grant Letters Patent for establishing a Theatre in the City of Edinburgh, or

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[25] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[26] Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2015).
[27] Ian Brown, ed, *The Edinburgh companion to Scottish Drama* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2011), p. 22.
[28] John Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of George Lawson* (Edinburgh: [s.n.], 1861), p. 116.

suburbs thereof'.[29] John Corbett suggests that Scottish drama had always been a 'mongrel art, drawing its plots and characters from the wider repertoire of European […] theatre'.[30] The French prisoners arrived at an interesting and unusual time in the history of Scottish drama as it was beginning to mould and develop its identity, drawing from a variety of different influences both foreign and domestic.

As Corbett points out, 'a taste for francophone work in translation is […] clearly evident in plays produced [in Scotland] in the nineteenth century'.[31] The mid-to-late nineteenth-century, for instance, would see an increase in the translations/adaptation of Molière's works in Scotland.[32] Although the French prisoners performing theatre in the borders invariably crossed several social boundaries, they are nonetheless engaging on the fringes of a theatrical milieu that is in the process of building its own identity. The plays performed both at Selkirk and Kelso provide a unique glimpse into the complex relationships between England, France and Scotland, and their own theatrical institutions and traditions.

Selkirk

In October 1810, nearly 150 Napoleonic prisoners of war arrived on parole in Selkirk, a small town in the Scottish borders whose relative proximity to Edinburgh, rural situation, and compact population made it ideally suited as a parole town.[33] Selkirk was a relatively small village with approximately 1,800 inhabitants in 1811.[34] A considerable number of the prisoners sent to Selkirk were captives from Bailen such as Jules Le Gendre and Lieutenant Charles

[29] Quoted in Donald Mackenzie, *Scotland's First National Theatre* (Edinburgh: Stanley Press, 1963), p. 8.
[30] John Corbett, 'Translated Drama in Scotland', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2011), p. 96.
[31] Corbett, p. 97.
[32] See Introduction to Noël Peacock, *Molière in Scotland: 1945-1990* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French & German Publications, 1993).
[33] List of French prisoners at Selkirk can be found at Scottish Record Office GD1/405/1, published in *Scottish Historical Review*, volume 32.
[34] Walter Elliot, *The French in Selkirk, 1811-1814* (Galashiels: Ettrick and Lauderdale District Council Museum Service, 1982), p. 2.

Frossard.[35] Others were naval officers or surgeons captured by the British years earlier like privateer Antoine Bertrand, seized on board the *Amis Réunis* in the Persian Gulf in 1805, and Ensign Philippe Jatriel, who survived the destruction of the frigate *Amphitrite* in Martinique in 1809. Another prisoner at Selkirk was a Frenchman named Adelbert J. Doisy de Villargennes. Doisy was a *sous lieutenant* in the 26th infantry regiment, captured in Spain in May 1811 and passed into captivity on parole at Selkirk in October 1811. Doisy's memoir shines light on the conditions and experiences of the French prisoners on parole at Selkirk.[36]

The French officers on parole in Selkirk lived in civilian accommodation around the town and once they were settled in Selkirk they began to turn their efforts toward leisure and entertainment. 'Nous étions trop Français pour nous laisser envahir par les tristesses de la captivité, par le sentiment d'incertitude qui enveloppait le moment de notre délivrance, ou bien pour nous laisser aller au chagrin et aux lamentations' ['We were too French to let ourselves be overcome buy the sadness of our captivity, by the feeling of uncertainty concerning the moment of our delivrance, or to allow ourselves to give way to grief or lamentations'.] [37] The prisoners at Selkirk quickly pooled their resources to make the most of the bleak situation.

The prisoners created a Masonic Lodge in the main square in Selkirk, a French café was created, and one prisoner, Doisy notes, procured a billiard table from Edinburgh. Having considerable musical talents among them, some prisoners hired instruments from Edinburgh and 'réunîmes vingt-deux exécutants qui, sous la direction d'un violoniste de premier ordre, formèrent un orchestre supérieur à tout ce que les échos de notre résidence écossaise avaient jusqu'alors répercuté' ['brought together twenty-five executants who, under the leadership of

[35] Registers of prisoners on parole: TNA: ADM 103/295; prisoners from Bailen listed in TNA: ADM 103/375; Letter dated 16 August 1811 indicates 223 officers, 1674 other ranks captured at Bailen, TNA: ADM 98/118.
[36] Adelbert Jacques Doisy de Villargennes, *The French prisoners of war at Selkirk* (n.d.) being extracts translated by J. John Vernon from *Souvenirs militaires de Doisy de Villargennes*, (Paris, 1894). Quotes taken from Walter Elliot, *The French in Selkirk, 1811-1814* (Galashiels: Ettrick and Lauderdale District Council Museum Service, 1982).
[37] Doisy, p. 40.

a violinist of the first order, constituted an orchestra superior to everything to which the echoes of our Scottish residence had until then resounded']. [38]

According to Doisy, billiards and concerts did not satisfy the prisoners' needs for very long. Like the captives of the Isla de Leon, Cabrera and Portchester Castle, the French prisoners on parole in Selkirk soon turned their talents toward theatre. Doisy suggests that prisoners' 'Frenchness', and their 'passion for theatre', allowed them to carry on with a sort of *joie de vivre*, in spite of the grim circumstances in which they found themselves transported. To this end the prisoners went about collecting a sum of £100 among themselves and rented a barn on the outskirt of Selkirk, purchased both tools and materials to begin constructing a theatre. The theatricals were complete with accompaniment of an orchestra 'supplied by our band'. The exact location of the parole officer's theatre is unclear. Doisy notes that the theatre was built in a barn on the outskirts of the village. He also mentions that prisoners built benches 'pour asseoir deux cents spectateurs' ['to seat two hundred spectators']. As there were only 150 prisoners on parole in Selkirk, this number suggests that the theatre was designed to accommodate locals as well as prisoners. 'Nous avions tous les mercredis une représentation pour laquelle nous étendions les mêmes invitations que pour nos concerts du samedi, de sorte que notre grange était généralement bondée, mais en majeure partie de nos camarades' ['Every Wednesday we had a performance, writes Doisy, 'for which we extended the same invitations as for our Saturday concerts, so our barn was generally crowded, though mainly with our comrades'.][39]

The parole officers pooled their resources and eventually made costumes and scenery. Principally, the make-up of parole prisoners consisted of officers hailing from the upper classes of French society. These officers lacked the practical artisanal skills of the *société* at Portchester Castle. Doisy admits, 'Aucun de nous n'avait auparavant exercé le métier de charpentier, de tapissier, de tailleur ou... fait son apprentissage chez une couturière' ['None of us had previously practised the trade of carpenter, upholsterer or tailor, or been

[38] Doisy, p. 40.
[39] Doisy, p. 40.

apprenticed to a dress-maker'].[40] Unlike the French prisoners held at Portchester Castle, the paroled officers lacked the experience of a seasoned theatre *machiniste* like Carré. The prisoners struggled when it came to creating costumes, particularly for the female roles. As a result, we can only assume that the theatricals lacked the same quality design and style elements that were so highly praised in the Portchester Castle theatrical representations.

The skills of the parole prisoners invariably determined their repertoire. The officers were unable to perform *grand spectacle* such as melodramas or *féerie*. 'Après quelques répétitions soignées, nous eûmes un répertoire de choix, tiré de nos auteurs tragiques et comiques les plus populaires. La partie musicale, de son côté, posséda des morceaux do nos meilleurs vaudevilles' ['After several careful rehearsals we had a choice repertory drawn from our most popular tragic and comic authors,. As for the musical side, it was in possession of pieces from our best vaudevilles'.][41] Doisy stops short of revealing exactly which authors or texts were being performed at Selkirk.

To get a better sense of which texts might have been performed at Selkirk, we can turn to the Selkirk Subscription Library registers.[42] From as early as 1799, the Selkirk Subscription Library offered the prisoners of war access to the library's book collection for the duration of their stay. Remarkably, a full record of the prisoners' use of the library survives, providing a unique window into their reading habits, and potentially to the repertoire of plays they have access to during their time at Selkirk. The library itself provided a healthy supply of plays to perform. Indeed, the very first book to be borrowed was a volume of plays taken out by Jules le Gendre, an army captain captured at Bailen. Following this we find several loans of Bell's canonical collection of *British Theatre* including plays by Shakespeare, George Farquhar, Samuel Foote and Joanna Baillie.[43] Loans of other theatrical texts include a large selection of

[40] Doisy, p. 40.
[41] Doisy, p. 40.
[42] Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, SBA S/PL/7 1799-1814.
[43] In 1791, John Bell published *British Theatre* as a collection of 140 plays in 21 volumes.

canonical British plays by Colley Cibber, William Congreve, John Dryden, John Gay, and Vanbrugh.[44]

The subscription registers reveal that the first volume of plays to be loaned was a volume of Molière's plays to Edward de la Faige on 19 May 1811. The table below reveals a number of individual loans of texts by each author.

Authors (number of individual loans) between 1811-1814:[45]

1. Colley Cibber (20)
2. John Vanbrugh: plays (13), comedies (1)
3. Molière (10)
4. Joanna Baillie (8)
5. William Congreve (7)
6. John Dryden (5)
7. George Farquhar (4)
8. Samuel Foote (3)
9. John Gay (2)

We note from the library registers that loans of plays by two British playwrights—Cibber and Vanbrugh—significantly surpass the number of loans of plays by Molière. Among the prisoners borrowing dramatic texts, Doisy borrows Molière (9 June 1812), and Congreve and Vanbrugh: plays (30 June 1813). Lieutenant Charles Frossard, one of the memoirists from Cabrera, borrows Vanbrugh's plays (29 July 1812), and Dryden's plays (26 September 1812; January 1812). The prisoner with the most loans of dramatic texts was Henri Tourat, a mate on the frigate *Los Dolores* captured in 1806, borrowing seven different authors with a total of eleven loans: Foote (2 March 1812), Dryden (14 March 1812, 1 April 1812, 4 April 1812), Farquhar (6 May 1812), Vanbrugh (20 May 1812), Bell (17 June 1812), and Cibber (9 June 1812).[46]

[44] Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, SBA S/PL/7 1799-1814; see Appendix for list of theatrical text loaned.
[45] Source: Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, SBA S/PL/7 1799-1814.
[46] Source: Selkirk Subscription Library Registers, SBA S/PL/7 1799-1814.

Unfortunately, evidence of the theatricals at Selkirk is too thin to know whether or not the prisoners were performing these texts, or simply reading them. Doisy mentions performing 'nos auteurs' which seems to suggest that prisoners were performing French authors. Nevertheless, the fact that French prisoners were reading canonical British theatrical texts is still significant. Aside from theatrical texts, Mark Towsey points out that the French also read British history and novels. As Towsey notes that this has 'profound ramifications for the way in which the two parties perceived each other, breaking down the politically constructed 'otherness' that is said to have underpinned the 'total war' waged between Napoleon and the British Empire'.[47] Towsey's findings support the assertions put forward in this study that call for more nuanced understanding of the dynamic Anglo-French relationship during the period as we shall examine later this chapter.

Kelso

The French at Selkirk were not the only parole prisoners to create amateur theatricals in Scotland. The small town of Kelso located on the banks of the river Tweed was selected as one of the parole towns to house French prisoners who began to arrive in November 1810. Like Selkirk, Kelso soon became home to a thriving community of French parole officers and played host to their theatricals.

James Haig's *History of Kelso and Roxburgh* published in 1825, suggests that the prisoners in Kelso were warmly received into the local community. 'During their stay', writes Haig, the French prisoners, 'conducted themselves with great propriety, and received the most civil and hospitable treatment from the inhabitants, which they repaid by contributing not a little to their amusement, by their theatrical and other exhibitions, to which the more respectable classes were invited'. Haig suggests that a rudimentary theatre had been created in Kelso's Horse-market when the inhabitants were denied access to the Assembly-

[47] Towsey, pp. 260-61.

Rooms.[48] Alistair Moffat mentions that the theatre was built in 1791 and operated until 1809.[49] Playbills at the National Archive of Scotland document performances in 1802-3 at the Kelso Theatre, which include a visit from John Kemble on 18 November 1803 billed as 'Mr Kemble's Third Night' in a performance of Cumberland's *Wheel of Fortune*.[50] Kemble appears to make a return on the evening of 22nd November 1803 as John Locke in *The Miller of Wakefield*. According to Haig, the French prisoners refitted the Kelso Theatre at their own expense and distributed tickets *gratis* to the 'respectable classes'. Unlike the theatricals at Selkirk, we have evidence of the theatricals at Kelso to reveal what plays they were performing. In the papers of the Harden family, Lords Polwarth in the National Archives of Scotland is a surviving playbill (see fig. 19 and 20) from a performance of Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville* (*The Barber of Seville*) at the French parole theatre in Kelso along with a shorter opéra-comique, *Blaise et Babet* (1783) in June 1811.[51]

Class and Sociability

Considering the officers' repertoire as a whole this is a remarkable difference to the genres and styles of plays performed by the rank and file prisoners at Portchester Castle. In contrast to the rank and file theatricals, there is no melodrama, spectacle or light entertainments in the officers' chosen repertoire of plays. The officers' repertoire is altogether more genteel with high comedy and tragedy, genres that had been enshrined into the realm of the *grands théâtres* by Napoleon's 1806 decree, and with the exception of Gouffé and Duval's *Garrick Double* (1800) all the plays are written by *ancien régime* playwrights.

While there are a number of factors at play in the distinction between genres performed by the rank and file and those performed by the officers, the

[48] James Haig, *A Topographical and Historical Account of the Town of Kelso, and of the Town and Castle of Roxburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Library, 1825), p. 97.
[49] Alistair Moffat, *Kelsae: A History of Kelso from Earliest Times* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), pp. 147-48.
[50] Playbills, National Library of Scotland (NLS): NF.1541.e.4(5).
[51] Beaumarchais title quoted in English. Scott family of Harden, Lords Polwarth, Berwickshire, NAS: GD 157/2004.

chief distinction is made along the lines of social background. As discussed in Chapter 2, under the Consulate and Empire, the officer corps in Napoleon's Grande Armée was largely composed of young men from upper class or affluent social backgrounds. Their social backgrounds inherently informed and influenced their theatrical tastes.

Théâtre de société

Theatre played a part in Napoleon's political and military agenda. Napoleon used theatre as a means of reinforcing his own Imperial dogmas and image not only to the theatre-going public in France, but also to his own troops. One of the most famous examples, during the celebrations for the return of the Grande Armée to France in 1808, Napoleon's government treated the Imperial Guard to the opéra, *Le Triomphe de Trajan* (1807). At the height of the performance, a cascade of laurel wreaths descended upon the troops to honour them for their recent victories.[52] According to Michael Hughes, performances and spectacles such as *Trajan* were simply part of Napoleon's wider plans to create a new military culture that would forge the entire French army into a military force that embodied his goals and values.[53]

Throughout the late eighteenth century theatre played a role in military colleges and academies. In 1791, for instance, at the College du Havre, directed by l'abbe Truble, the students performed Lemierre's *Guillaume Tell* (1766) and the following year they staged Voltaire's *Brutus* (1727) and *Le Danger des mauvais sociétés* (probably Moissy's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*). In 1785, *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes* was published with plays intended for family theatricals at home. In 1789, Nougaret published *Théâtre à l'usage des collèges, des écoles royales militaires et des pensions particulières* with a prescribed series of plays to be performed in military schools.[54]

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[52] Reported in *Le Moniteur*, 29 November 1807; cited in A.B., *Histoire des Triomphes Militaires, des Fêtes Guerrières et des Honneurs accordés aux braves chez les peuples anciens et modernes; Particulièrement aux Armées Françaises, jusqu'au 1er janvier 1808* (Paris: Chez Ant. Bailleul, 1808), p. 464.
[53] Hughes, p. 25.
[54] Comtesse de Stéphanie Félicité Genlis, *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes* (Paris: [s.n.], 1785); Pierre Jean Baptiste Nougaret, *Théâtre à l'usage des colleges, des ecoles*

In France, performing amateur theatricals, or *théâtre de société*, is a tradition that gained considerable fashion in the eighteenth century, but continued to flourish well into the late ninteenth century.[55] For David Trott, *théâtre de société* in eighteenth-century France was a 'système généralisé de communication des idées, des valeurs et des façons d'être' ['general system of communication ideas, values and ways of being'].[56] Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval notes that 'socialisation' was one of the main motivations for performing *théâtre de société*.[57] Plagnol-Diéval argues that while *théâtre de société* may be considered one of the central manifestations of sociability in the *ancien régime*, the fact that it did not always coalesce with Revolutionary ideals or events such as the clubs, patriotic societies, or even salons, its sociable form was largely ignored in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[58] However, we cannot ignore the fact that many of the officers at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Selkirk and Kelso would have participated in a culture of *théâtre de société* either in school or in their social lives back in France.

The same vogue for private theatre and theatricals occurred in Britain too, albeit on a slower pace and scale than in France. At one time France had fourteen private theatres while England only had four.[59] In *Mansfield Park* (1814), Jane Austen gives us perhaps the most famous private theatrical in literature not

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royales militaires et des pensions particulieres (Paris: chez Defer de Maisonneuve, 1789).

[55] In France, the fashion for having a private theatre dates back to 1722 at Alexandre-Eutrope de Lur-Salcues' château de Mall near Bordeaux. Voltaire created his own private theatre at Cirey in the 1730s. The Little Theatre at Versailles opened in 1747 with Molière's *Tartuffe* (1667). Queen's Theatre for Marie-Antoinette built in 1778.

[56] David Trott, 'Qu'est-ce que le théâtre de société?', *Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre*, 1 (2005), 7-20

[57] Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, *Tréteaux et paravents: le théaître de société au XIXe siècle*, ed. Jean-Claude Yon and Nathalie Le Gonidec (Paris: Creaphis éditions, 2012), p. 25.

[58] Plagnol-Diéval, p. 33; Antoine Lilti points out that 'Les salons de Mme Flauhaut, Condorcet, Stael, Roland, Chastellux, de la Reynière, de la princesse de Beauvau, de la comtesse de Sabran ou de la duchesse de La Vallière se preoccupant peu de theatre de société'. See Antoine Lilti, 'Mondanité et Révolution: les homes de lettres et la sociabilité mondaine à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', in *Réseaux et sociabilité littéraire en Révolution,* ed by Philippe Bourdin and J. L. Chappey (Clermont-Ferrand: 2007), pp. 31-50.

[59] For background on private aristocratic theatres in French country houses see Mark Girouard, *Life in the French Country House* (London: Cassell, 2000).

entirely unlike those staged by the French officers. In the novel, the private theatricals serve as a realm for sociability as the protagonists stage, *Lovers' Vows*. Gillian Russell points out that 'Not only were new venues and modes of entertainment developed, but the elite and gentry household also feature significantly as a venue for sociability in the form of balls, masquerades, concerts, card parties and private theatricals'.[60] Evidence suggests that most French officers on parole in Britain took full advantage of these 'venues for sociability', demonstrating a remarkable degree of interest in integrating and socialising with local British gentry.

Sociability

There is ample evidence that suggests the French officers were highly connected with the surroundings in which they found themselves. A gentleman farmer living in the outskirts of Cupar in Fife is cited in Francis Abell's history of prisoners of war saying that: 'There was no thought of war and its fierce passions among the youth of the company [of prisoners] in the simple dinners, suppers and carpet-dances in private houses. There were congratulations on the abundance of pleasant partners and the assurance that no girl need now sit out a dance or lack an escort […] Love and marriage ensued between the youngsters, the vanquished and the victors'.[61] We have evidence of this at Ashby-de-la-Zouch where we record nearly a dozen marriages between French officers and local British women. On 13 May 1806, for instance, French Lieutenant Francis Robert, who played Sgaranelle in *Le Médecin malgré lui,* married local British woman, Jane Bedford.[62] Robert was not the only French officer on parole in Ashby-de-la-Zouch to make a local connection. On 5th June 1809, *sous-lieutenant* Louis Jean, who played Valère in Molière's *Le Médecin*, married

[60] Gillian Russell, 'Private Theatricals', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830,* ed. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 191-203 (p. 192).
[61] Cited in Abell, p. 317.
[62] Francis Robert was captured at La Caille and transferred from Oldiham to Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1804. His marriage is recorded on 13th May 1806, the register at St. Helen's Church. For marriages between French parole prisoners at St Helen's Church (1806-1814), Ashby-de-la-Zouch, see Crane and Hillier, Appendix 3, p. 39.

Elizabeth Edwards.[63] These are just two of over a dozen recorded marriages between French prisoners and locals.

Doisy similarly notes that the officers of Selkirk made 'several agreeable friends and acquaintances in the neighbouring district'. One of these 'agreeable friends' was a man of some repute. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was born in Edinburgh in 1771, and would later become famous as the author of several highly popular historical novels. By 1813, Doisy recalls how he and a few of his comrades were invited by Scott to his new home at Abbotsford. There they met Scott's French-born wife, Charlotte Carpenter.[64] The French guests had been invited, it would seem, for literary purposes. Doisy notes that the subject of discussion was not politics, but 'de minutieux détails concernant l'armée française'. ['minute details concerning the French army'.] Scott was hungry for any information about Napoleon particularly his 'traits' and 'anecdotes' about the Emperor. Little did the French guests know that Scott was conducting research for his own biography, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, published in Edinburgh in 1827. Doisy claims that the biography 'est une tache sur le nom de son illustre auteur' ['a stain on the name of its illustrious author'] as he cites events connected with the Emperor which had been divulged over dinner by the French prisoners on parole.[65] Far from being ideologically dangerous or subversive, the French officers provide a source of knowledge and inspiration for Scott's work.

If we narrow our focus even more to the theatre itself, we gain a unique and valuable insight into the wider cultural relations between the British and French at a localized level with a different and perhaps more revealing cultural interface. Writing on private theatricals in Britain in the early nineteenth century, Gillian Russell suggests that 'private theatricals enabled men and women not only to play at being actors and actresses but also to participate in theatre as a

[63] Louis Jean served in the Army of San Domingo and was captured on 1 December 1803. He was registered at Portsmouth on 4 November 1804. See Crane and Hillier, Appendix 3, p. 39.
[64] Carpenter's surname was anglicised from the French 'Charpentier'.
[65] Doisy, p. 43.

social ritual'.[66] Theatre served as a domain of sociability, a place where people met and exchanged ideas and different points of view, a place where identities were displayed, discussed and re-negotiated.

The same notion holds true for the amateur theatricals of the French parole officers. Closer inspection of the theatrical repertoire suggests much closer links between the British and France than is previously been acknowledged. While physical evidence of the theatricals is relatively thin, we have two playbills from performances at Ashby, which provide revealing clues that allow us to read further into the relationsip between the British and French in this small market town in rural Leicestershire. They playbills for Ashby indicate an invitation to an audience of British 'Ladies and Gentlemen'. Likewise, Haig mentions that the theatre at Kelso was attended by the 'respectable classes'. Of these 'respectable classes' given admission, Francis Abell notes that when the Duchess of Roxburgh visited the French theatre at Kelso, the streets were laid out with red carpet.[67] The fact that the playbill survives among the papers of the Lords Polwarth also gives some indication of the level of respectability among the audience at Kelso.[68] This is not altogether surprising, however. The selection of a more genteel repertoire of plays may also have been influenced by the audience to which the prisoners' were performing. At Selkirk, we know that the officers were primarily performing amongst themselves. However, at Kelso we are told that the officers were performing to the 'respectable classes' including on at least one occasion, the Duchess of Roxburgh. Likewise at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, we know that the prisoners invited 'ladies and gentlemen' to their performances.

In his study of Francophilia in Britain throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, Robert Eagles comments that even though Britain and France were at war, 'there was a far more profound and far-reaching relationship

[66] Russell, 'Private Theatricals', p. 191.
[67] Francis Abell does not give a source for this information. See Abell, p. 320.
[68] Lord Polwarth is a title in the Scottish peerage. Henry Francis Hepburne-Scott, 7th Lord Polwarth (1 January 1800 – 16 August 1867) was firstly a Member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom for Roxburghshire, 1826–32, then a Representative Peer for Scotland in the House of Lords at Westminster. He was Lord Lieutenant and Sheriff Principal of Selkirkshire, and a Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria. Their seat was Marchmont House in Berwickshire.

between the two nations than is usually acknowledged'.[69] Eagles points out that Francophilia in the eighteenth century was largely an upper class and aristocratic obsession in Britain. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, British aristocrats and the upper-class elite traveled to Paris as the first stop on their grand tour of Europe. However, events quickly changed during the Revolution and, with the exception of a brief window during the Peace of Amiens, travel between Britain and France had been suspended.

Nevertheless, despite the cessation of physical transfers between the two countries, French culture, language, and fashions continued to hold sway with the social and political elite of Britain. One rather humourous example is recorded by American diplomat Richard Rush visiting Lord Castleigh in London where he complains that all conversations took place in French, not English. Rush writes: 'Here, at the house of an English minister of state, French literature, the French language, French topics were all about me; I add, French entrées, French wines!' [70] From 1803 to 1814, the only way some Francophile 'respectable classes' could see French theatre was through attending those theatricals of the prisoners on parole. It is therefore unsurprising to find that the Duchess of Roxburgh visited the parole theatre at Kelso.

Connecting Cultures: Voltaire, Molière, and Garrick

At the bottom of the Kelso playbill for *Le Barbier de Séville* [*The Barber of Seville*] is a hand-written note stating (in original English): 'These Plays were acted by the French officers, Prisoners at Kelso June 1811; the Dresses and Decorations of a very pretty theatre being made entirely by themselves'.[71] This note reveals that the officers at Kelso, like those at Selkirk, are utilising their own resources to produce amateur theatricals not only for their own entertainment, but also, for local audiences. The fact that the prisoners were

[69] Robert Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 6.
[70] Richard Rush, *A Residence at the Court of London* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), p. 59.
[71] Scott family of Harden, Lords Polwarth, Berwickshire, NAS GD 157/2004.

investing their own time and funds to create theatrical entertainment for British audiences runs contrary to theories that the two were cultural rivals or antagonists.

The Kelso theatricals are not an isolated incident. Indeed, in all three parole towns there is evidence that the French officers used their own means to entertain local audience. There is also overwhelming evidence that the parole French officers used theatre for the good of the British community as much as for their own entertainment. Haig notes that when the prisoners left Kelso in 1814, 'as a mark of their gratitude for the polite attention and kind treatment they had experienced, left the whole standing, with all their scenery and decorations'.[72] Similarly, Doisy tells us that upon release in 1814, the French prisoners left their theatre intact for use by the local British amateur theatre troupe.[73] Certainly, it was impractical for the prisoners to transport their amateur theatre back to France. Nevertheless, leaving it intact for the locals to use suggests a charitable act of cooperation, not cultural antagonism.

Aside from donating their materials to the local community when they left, there are other signs of altruism that colour our understanding of the French prisoners of war. The playbill for the Society Theatre at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, for example, clearly states that on Thursday the 3 May 1810, the French Gentlemen Prisoners of War performed 'For the Benefit of the Poor'. The statement seems to suggest that the prisoners were charging admittance fees that they would in turn be donated to the poor.[74] Both cases of benevolence and altruism suggest that theatre acted as a facility for cultural cooperation, as a means of charity toward the well being of the local British community. These documented interactions shed a new light on the 'captivity zone' as a place of mutual respect for humanity and culture.

Renaud Morieux points out that parole towns themselves offered a 'lens through which to glimpse the repercussions of international conflicts at the level

[72] Haig, p. 139
[73] Doisy, p. 40.
[74] The *droit des Indigenes* was a custom in France 'which is a fixed sum, or percentage paid for each performance, on every theatre in France, to the poor of the town'. Thomas Lawrence, *Picture of Verdun*, I, (London: T. Hookham, Jun. & E. T. Hookham, 1810), p. 243.

of local communities, small towns, and villages'.[75] By detailing the theatricals of the prisoners at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and in the border towns of Scotland, alongside the broader dynamics of their interaction with the local community, we can assess the cultural encounters that resulted when Napoleonic prisoners of war arrived on parole in small, provincial British communities, highlighting the experiences of both parties as they gradually recognized mutual interests that transcended national or ethnic 'otherness'. Both communities (French and British) discovered that their counterparts were not quite as different as they imagined them to be, contradicting notions that set the British and French as political and cultural enemies. In all but a few instances we find relative harmony between the two cultures in the 'captivity zones' of parole towns. To illustrate this point we can look not only to documented evidence of interactions between the British and French in parole towns, but also examine the repertoire itself to amply demonstrate the cooperative cultural dynamics in parole towns.

In these parole towns, theatre served as an embassy for connecting disparate cultures. The prisoners were using theatre as a safe embassy in which to negotiate mutual trust and respect, using laughter to overcome political and cultural differences. Voltaire's *La Mort de César* (*The Death of Caesar*, 1735), for example, performed on 29 March 1810 by French officers at Ashby-de-la-Zouch can be placed in a broader Anglo-French context. *César* is often erroneously described as a reworking of the first three acts of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Instead, Voltaire rewrote Shakespeare's original text in its entirety, using a different dramatic approach focusing on the act of tyrannicide itself. In Voltaire's *César*, the emotional dynamics of the play are complicated when at the moment of the planned assassination, Caesar reveals to Brutus that the latter is actually his own son. Ultimately, the son places the needs of the country over any paternal connection, and participates in the tyrant's assassination on the Ides of March.

The play presents elements that make it particularly relevant in the Anglo-French context. Voltaire's *César* is rich with Shakespearian influences, even though the play itself diverges from Shakespeare's original, it is still bears

[75] Morieux, p. 58.

strong resemblances in both subject and style. Indeed, in his life and work, Voltaire made no secret of his admiration for British culture, and particularly, for the works of Shakespeare. From 1726 to 1729, Voltaire lived in England and in his *Lettres philosophiques,* published just one year before the premier of *La Mort de César* in Paris, he lavishes praise on English arts. On the subject of English theatre, Voltaire takes a particularly bold stance. 'The English had a regular theatre', he famously writes, 'while the French had as yet but booths'.[76] In his preface to the 1736 edition of *La Mort de César*, Voltaire is eager to state that his new tragedy portrays 'le génie et le caractère des écrivains Anglois, aussi-bien que celui du people romain. On y voit cet amour dominant de la Liberté, et ces hardiesses que les Auteurs Français ont rarement' ['The spirit and character of the English writers, as well as that of the Roman people. In them we see that overriding love of liberty, and a boldness that is rarely found in French authors.'][77] The 'génie' of the English is equated with freedom, which is the characteristic of the Romans as well as the English.[78]

While Voltaire championed England's national playwright, Shakespeare, the French national playwright, Molière also held a special place in Britain. Scholars have pointed to Molière's influence on Restoration comedy in England. Allardyce Nichol suggests that English theatre in the second half of the eighteenth century 'ransacked' the works of French playwrights, particularly Molière, whose comedies they found 'fruitful of suggestions'.[79] For instance, Colman's *Spleen* (Drury Lane, 1776) and Bickerstaffe's *Dr Last in his Chariot* (Haymarket, 1776) were largely based on Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673) while *L'Étourdi* (1655)*, L'École des Femmes* (1662) and *L'École des Maris* (1661) all directly influenced Murphy's *The School of Guardians* (Covent Garden, 1767) while *Le Mariage forcé* was almost directly adapted for Garrick's *The Irish Widow* (Drury Lane, 1772).

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[76] Voltaire, *The Works of Voltaire*, trans. William F. Fleming, 21 vols (New York: E.R. DuMont, 1901), XIX, p. 44.
[77] Voltaire, *La Mort de César Seconde édition revue, corrigée et augmentée par l'auteur*, (Paris: L chez É. Ledet et Compagnie, 1736), p. iv.
[78] Voltaire, *La Mort de César,* p. iv.
[79] Nicoll, *English Drama,* IV, p. 117.

On 3 May 1810, approximately six weeks after their performance of Voltaire's *César*, the Society Theatre of French parole prisoners at Ashby-de-la-Zouch presented one of Molière's most popular comedies, *Le Médecin malgré lui* (The Doctor in Spite of Himself). *Le Médecin malgré lui* opened at le théâtre du Palais-Royal by la Troupe du Roi in Paris in 1666 and became one of Molière's most popular plays performed in Paris in the 1790s with 239 recorded performances.[80] In 1732, *Le Médecin malgré lui* was adapted for the English stage by Henry Fielding, as *The Mock Doctor; or The Dumb Lady Cur'd* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

The parole officers at Selkirk demonstrate a similar preference for Molière. As we have seen, the author's dramatic texts are among the most borrowed from the Subscription Library at Selkirk. In addition to Molière, the prisoners are borrowing Colley Cibber and Vanbrugh. Colley Cibber (1671-1757) was an actor-manager at the Drury Lane, a playwright, and Poet Laureate. Among his many plays were the successful Restoration comedy, *Love's Last Shift* (1696) and *The Careless Husband* (1704). However, Cibber also managed to pen a number of plays drawn directly from Molière including *The Nonjuror* (1717) adapted from *Tartuffe* while his play *The Refusal* (1721) was based on *Les Femmes savantes*.[81]

John Vanbrugh (1664-1724) was a Restoration playwright and architect famous for his comedy *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696) a sequel to Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*. As an architect, Vanbrugh is noted for his designs of both Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard. Vanbrugh himself had a particularly unusual relationship with the French. In 1696, he played a crucial role in bringing about the invasion of William of Orange, but was arrested as a spy in Calais and sent to prison in the Bastille. Vanbrugh spent nearly five years as a French prisoner, a time which his biographer claims, left him with a lasting distaste for the French political system but also with a taste for the comic

[80] Kennedy, p. 102.
[81] *The Nonjuror* (1717) features a Papist spy as a villain. Written just two years after the Jacobite Rising of 1715, it was an obvious propaganda piece directed against Roman Catholics.

dramatists and the architecture of France.[82] While both Cibber and Vanbrugh are British authors, there is strong evidence that both authors—not to mention Congreve, Dryden, and other Restoration dramatists—drew heavily from Molière. Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) was freely adapted from *Le Tartuffe* (1664) while Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700) takes inspiration from *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659).[83] All of the texts therefore evince some semblance of a subcutaneous Frenchness that, if unacknowledged, nevertheless provided fertile soil for British theatre to thrive throughout the Restoration period and throughout the eighteenth century.

The Subscription Library at Selkirk reveals that the French officers on parole were not only borrowing Molière, and British Restoration comedies, they were also reading a volume of plays by contemporary Scottish playwright, Joanna Baillie (1762-1851). Baillie was born in Bothwell, Lanarkshire Scotland, the daughter of Presbyterian minister. In the 1780s, Baillie moved to London with her family, and found herself drawn into a literary salon, which included among prominent female writers Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Carter, and Elizabeth Montagu. Baillie herself also began seriously writing drama. She had a ready supply of books and studied the French authors Corneille, Racine, Molière, and Voltaire, as well as Shakespeare and the older English dramatists.

In 1798, Baillie published her first volume of *Plays on the Passions,* published anonymously under the title of *A Series of Plays*. Volume I consisted of *Count Basil*, a tragedy on love, *The Tryal*, a comedy on love, and *De Monfort*, a tragedy on hatred. In 1800, *De Monfort* was produced at Drury Lane staring John Kemble and Sarah Siddons. Baillie's hostility to foreign influences, similar to the one Walpole expressed in the prologue to *The Mysterious Mother,* is evinced in the prologue to *De Monfort*:

> O, shame! - why borrow from a foreign store?
> As if the Rich should pilfer From the poor.-
> We who have forc'd th' astonished world to yield,

[82] Kerry Downes, *Sir John Vanbrugh A Biography* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p. 76.
[83] Nicholl, p. 117.

Led by immortal Shakespeare to the field;-
Whose Sires have felt all tender Otway's woe,
Have glow'd with Dryden, and have wept with Rowe.-
And we, their sons, now dull and senseless grown,
When all the realm of Comedy's our own?

Despite this ambivalence to 'foreign' influences, *De Monfort* draws upon a dramatic tradition strongly rooted in styles derived from the French. De Monfort exhibits all the signs of the tortured Romantic hero, 'a sullen wand'rer on the earth, / Avoiding all men, cursing and accursed'.[84] His strident individualism derives directly from the French Revolution, and coalesces with similar visions portrayed by Wordsworth and Coleridge, two writers influenced by the events in France.

Throughout the early 1800s, Baillie became a great friend of Sir Walter Scott, and wrote increasingly on Scottish themes and in Scottish ballad metres. Just two years before the French officers were reading Baillie's volume of plays from the Selkirk library, her Gothic melodrama *The Family Legend*, was performed in Edinburgh in 1810 with Sarah Siddons again in the leading role. In both style and composition, Baillie's *De Monfort* combines elements of the burgeoning Romantic and Gothic forms of drama and is therefore tied into the nexus of Anglo-French relations from the eighteenth century that influenced Horace Walpole's play *The Mysterious Mother* and Ann Radcliffe's gothic novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. As Angela Wright points out: 'The embryonic Gothic genre of eighteenth-century Britain is consistently coy about its French inspiration'. 'The Gothic provides a striking example of the literary respect that prevailed between France and England during military hostilities'. Wright argues that Gothic literature in Britain 'sprung from French sources, nurtured by French culture, and formative in their veiled, measured, contemplative, independent and often witty responses to Anglo-French hostilities'.[85] French influences can be found not only in Baillie's works, but indeed, in the works of all the dramatists

[84] *De Monfort* (1798), I. 2.
[85] Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 10.

borrowed from the Selkirk Library. The French officers were selecting works 'sprung from French sources, nurtured by French culture'. This could be read as a form of cultural imperialism, in which the French were actively engaging with texts that draw their sources from a superior French literature and culture. However, there is one play in the repertoire that challenges this assumption.

In the repertoire at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, there is evidence of a play that suggests a sense of the 'literary respect that prevailed between France and England during military hostilities'.[86] *Garrick Double, ou les Deux acteurs anglais* is a one-act comedy in prose mingled with vaudevilles by Armand Gouffé and Georges Duval which opened at Théâtre des Troubadours in Paris on 14 February 1800. Of all the plays in the repertoire of French prisoners of war performing in Britain, *Garrick Double* is perhaps the most revealing about the true cultural dynamics of prisoner of war theatricals.

Garrick Double is set in Kildare, Ireland. After a failed acting career in Scotland, Chalmers decides to start afresh in Ireland introducing himself as Garrick. When the real Garrick arrives in Kildare *incognito* and he meets his imitator who invites him to play alongside him in *Macbeth*. A theatre manager from Dublin writes to Garrick, but the letter is intercepted by Chalmers who learns of Garrick's true identity. He tries to flee, but is caught by a police constable and revealed to be a dupe, and is arrested. Playwright and theatre manager Richard Brinsley Sheridan arrives and offers to take the real Garrick to go to Dublin.

David Garrick (1717-1779) was one of the most revered British actors of the age and manager of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. Garrick himself hailed from French Huguenot roots as his grandfather, David Garric, was in Bordeaux in 1685 when the Edict of Nantes was abolished, revoking the rights of Protestants in France. David Garric fled to London and his son, Peter, who was an infant at the time, was later smuggled out by a nurse when he was deemed old enough to make the journey. David Garric became a British subject upon his arrival in Britain and anglicised the name to Garrick.

[86] Wright, p. 10.

Garrick jouait avec succès
Tous les rôles en Angleterre;
Mais sera-t-il chez les Français
Aussi bien reçu du parterre?
Lorsqu'il vous demande la paix:
Et qu'il n'aspire qu'à vous plaire,
N'allez pas, bien qu'il soit Anglais,
Lui déclarer la guerre.

[Garrick played with success
All roles in England;
But will he be well-received
By the French in the stall?
When he asks you for peace:
And aspires only to please you,
Do not go, though he is English,
To declare war on him.]

In *Garrick Double*, Garrick is hailed again and again as a rival to Voltaire for 'le style tragique, / Epigrammatique, / Epique, / Philosophique, / Caustique; 'le premier de l'univers' [the tragic style / epigrammatic / epic / phisolophic / caustic; the best in the universe'].[87] In response, Chalmers, posing as Garrick, proclaims himself 'Le plus grand homme du siècle; d'ailleurs il fait grand cas de notre théâtre anglais' ['The greatest man of the century; besides he sets great store by our English theatre'].[88] Gouffé and Duval's comedy was not the first to portray British actors on the French stage. In 1800, another one-act comedy, *Le portrait de Fielding,* by Ségur, Desfaucherets and Déspres celebrating the literary career of Henry Fielding, features a host of other famous British personalities including David Garrick and William Hogarth. The fact that French officers on parole chose to portray Garrick to English audiences presents an

[87] *Garrick Double*, I. 4.
[88] *Garrick Double*, I. 4.

unusual phenomenon. Rather than demonstrating a tendency to be 'Dangerous in political or licentious Principle', the French prisoners on parole have chosen a work that celebrates and supports British culture and theatre.[89]

Garrick is a particularly relevant character in terms of the larger Anglo-French cultural relationship in the eighteenth century. Having visited Paris several times, and made valuable and lasting connections in France, Hedgecock writes that Garrick had established 'a bond between France and England' with a fluid 'exchange of opinions, […] all through the eighteenth century', and, had it not been for the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars, he 'might well have been hailed as one of the founders of the Entente Cordiale; and, even as it is, he must be considered as one of those who did most to dissipate the clouds of prejudice which hid France from England to bring about a parallelism of views between Paris and London'.[90] In dissipating the 'clouds of prejudice which hid France from England', Garrick understandably held a unique place in French legends at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

The 'parallelism of views between Paris and London' resulting from Garrick's interactions were deeply entrenched in Enlightenment France.[91] In the later part of the eighteenth-century, the Enlightenment thinker Jean-Baptiste Suard (1732-1817) observed that 'Le comedien Garrick, fut à son tour le spectacle, pour ainsi dire, et l'entretien de toutes les grandes sociétés de Paris' ['The comedian Garrick was, in his turn, the spectacle, so to speak, and the subject of all Parisian high society'].[92] Garrick's acting style was the subject of Diderot's *Observations sur Garrick*[93], in which he wrote: 'Je te prends à témoin, Roscius anglais, célèbre Garrick, toi qui, du consentement unanime de toutes les nations subsistantes, passes pour le premier comédien qu'elles aient connu, rends homage à la vérité!' ['I take you as a witness, English Roscius, the celebrated Garrick, you who, by the unanimous consent of all the subsisting nations, pass

[89] Circular, 8 October 1811, TNA: ADM 98/170.
[90] Frank Arthur Hedgcock, *A Cosmopolitan Actor: David Garrick and his French Friends* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., 1912), p. 412.
[91] Hedgcock, p. 412.
[92] Dominique-Joseph Garat, *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de M. Suard, sur ses écrits, et sur le XVIIe siècle, etc.* II (Paris: [s.n.], 1820), p. 124.
[93] Sabine Chaouche, 'Formes du théâtral diderotien', *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 47 (2012), 105-117.

for the best actor they have ever known, pay homage to the truth!'].[94] At the dawn of the nineteenth century, a new theatrical talent was emerging on the French stage. François-Joseph Talma was born in Paris in 1763, but moved to London with his father as a child. Talma made his acting debut in Voltaire's *Mahomet* at the Comédie-Française in 1787, but would later rise to become the pre-eminent actor of Emperor Napoleon's court. Historians have often pointed to Garrick's influence on Talma. Suard recalls, 'un rapprochement entre Talma et Garrick m'a paru bien plus naturel: il y a eu entre eux quelque rapport, il y a eu meme des ressemblances dans les momens surtout où les passions terribles sont plutot des délires que des fureurs' ['A rapprochement between Talma and Garrick seemed to me much more natural: there was some relation between them, and there were even resemblances, especially in those moments when terrible passions are more delirious than furious],[95] while a review of Talma's memoirs in *Spirit of the English Magazine* give Talma the title of 'The French Garrick'.[96]

Whether it was performing Voltaire's *La Mort de César* written 'dans le goût anglais' ['in the English style'],[97] or plays by Molière, which had an influence on English comedy, and proved popular on the British stage throughout the eighteenth century or a play that celebrated with 'greatest enthusiasm' one of the most iconic British actors of the eighteenth century, the repertoire demonstrates a keen sensitivity to British tastes, suggesting a desire on behalf of the French prisoners to ingratiate themselves with local communities.

The evidence contradicts, or at least nuances, notions that suggest the British and French were cultural and ideological antagonists throughout the Napoleonic Wars. Quite the opposite appears to be true. What we see here is an attempt to educate and entertain. As with Portchester Castle, we find a divergence of experiences pertaining to the Anglo-French relationship when it comes to central government and the local community. Often this divergence

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[94] Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien: ouvrage posthume de Diderot* (Paris: A. Sautelet, 1830), p. 57.
[95] Garat, II, p. 135.
[96] *Spirit of the English Magazines*, II, October 1817 to April 1818, p. 33.
[97] Voltaire, 'Preface', *La Mort de César* (Amsterdam: chez É. Ledet et Compagnie, 1736), p. vii.

distorts historical portrayals. Historians reading the correspondence of the Transport Board, for instance, will naturally come to the conclusion that the British and French were cultural and ideological opposites. It is only when we look more closely at the local-level, using unique facilities such as existing playbills to read and analyse repertoire that we find the opposite to be true. While central government agencies may have had justifiable anxieties about prisoner of war theatricals, examinations of the local level reveal a different picture. Instead of antagonism, there is mutual cultural respect, a real desire to present one's culture and learn about new cultures.

Conclusion

From the fetid salt marshes of the Isla de Leon to the remote island of Cabrera to Portchester Castle and to parole towns across Britain, the French prisoners from Bailen quickly turned to theatre as a means of assimilating the trauma of captivity. Relocating Napoleonic prisoner-of war-theatricals from the margins of history to the centre has yielded new insights not only into the psychological experiences of the prisoners themselves, but into the social and theatrical history of both Britain and France in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Charting the prisoners' journey through captivity in a chronological order has allowed us to view the evolution of their theatrical repertoire from location to location, observing and analysing the ways in which prisoners adapted to the widely varying availability of space and resources. The persistence and scale of theatricals in each location underlines the pivotal role of theatre in the prisoners' lives. Whether in a crowded military hospital, a remote, desolate island, or in the damp castle basement, the prisoners were tirelessly adapting to the most challenging, cramped, and inhospitable spaces, pulling together valuable limited resources in order to create theatre. Ultimately, the prisoners maximized the use of each space to its fullest potential cultimating in a theatre at Portchester Castle with a stage, *loges*, and an orchestra capable of performing full-scale boulevard melodrama with complex dance routines and various 'changements à vue'.

Theatre provided a safe space, a therapeutic outlet enabling the prisoners' emotional and psychological survival in number of unique but interconnected ways.[98] First, theatre served as a vital mode for prisoners to reconnect with a sense of home, preserving a French identity under threat from prolonged captivity. We have seen evocations of nostalgic sentiment for home manifest in both the physical space of theatre itself with motifs and design depicting 'souvenirs' of France. In addition to physical manifestations of home, the prisoners opted for 'les ouvrages les plus nouveaux et les plus en vogue' and that

[98] Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum, *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 2.

connected them with the safety and surety of a pre-captive past.[99] Drawing our focus specifically to the theatrical repertoire revealed recurring themes of judgement, salvation, betrayal and escape. In *Polichinelle devant l'inquisition* or *Le Deluge universel*, Polinchinelle is literally saved by Napoleon crowned with halo of Civilisation. Likewise in *Le Barbier de Séville*, *Les Folies amoureuses*, and *Roséliska* the heroine of each play is freed from captivity. Through theatre and performance, the prisoners were commenting on their circumstances, and assimilating and expressing their own hopes, fears, and desires.

Broadly speaking, there are two prominent features of the prisoners' repertoire that stand out. First, we find an overwhelming preference for humour and comedy either in Polichinelle, in vaudevilles or in the classic comedies of Beaumarchais, Regnard and Molière. Humour served an important role not only in brightening the prisoners' spirits, but also in establishing a bond between prisoners while often mocking their captors, and serving to lessen the threat of captivity. At Portchester Castle, we find the overwhelming popularity of melodrama. The popularity of melodrama at Portchester Castle not only served to reconnect the prisoners with a genre that was immensely popular on the French stage in the early nineteenth century, it was a genre that 'framed its narratives of trauma from the start within closing fantasies of redemptive justice and restored community'.[100] Melodrama established a moral universe that sees villainy punished and virtue rewarded. In *Roséliska, ou amour, haine et vengenance,* Lafontaine and Mouillefarine reflect this 'moral universe' by reflecting the prisoners' own circumstances on the stage. The play draws out poignant themes of loyalty and honour focusing upon a returning soldier who is betrayed by his closest friend. The dramatic action of the third act centres upon the main character escaping from a tower very much like the one in which the theatre was located at Portchester Castle. Ultimately, the moral universe of the play is balanced as virtue is rewarded and villainy punished.

Focusing our critical attention to prisoner-of-war theatricals at Portchester Castle allows us to re-examine the Anglo-French context through a

[99] Gille, p. 270.
[100] Matthew Buckley, 'Refugee Theatre: Melodrama and Modernity's Loss', *Theatre Journal*, 61 (2009), 175–90. (p. 180).

more localized perspective. In the early nineteenth century melodrama presented a controversial point of intersection of ideas, as Jane Moody points out, 'it was at once culturally progressive, but also dangerous to the formation of national identity'.[101] The fact that a reviewer hailed the French theatricals as 'not excelled by those performed in London' equally nuances existing paradigms that place French and British as cultural antagonists during this period.[102] The French theatricals at Portchester Castle and those of the paroled officers in towns and villages across the British Isles, reveal that theatre served as a cultural embassy linking Britain and France. These theatricals open new avenues of enquiry that challenge previously held notions that theatrical exchanges between Britain and France ceased completely during the Napoleonic Wars. Moreover, they provide compelling evidence to challenge notions of that suggest the British and French engaged in an antagonistic cultural identity in the period.

Building upon earlier research, this study has filled a void, adding a few more crucial threads to the larger tapestry of the Napoleonic prisoner-of-war experience not only demonstrating how theatre served as "emotional, psychological survival" of these prisoners of war, but also illustrating what these theatricals reveal about the large socio-cultural milieu of the Napoleonic era. We have formulated new ideas about the role of theatre in the psycho-social dynamics of the prisoner of war experience, highlighting important new complications in the Anglo-French cultural exchange, and bringing essential new findings to the fields of French theatre history and cultural history in Napoleonic and post-Revolutionary France.

[101] Jane Moody, 'The Theatrical Revolution, 1776-1843', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. 2: *1660 to 1895*, ed. Joseph Donohue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 212-13.
[102] *Hampshire Telegraph,* 7 January 1811, p. 3.

Illustrations

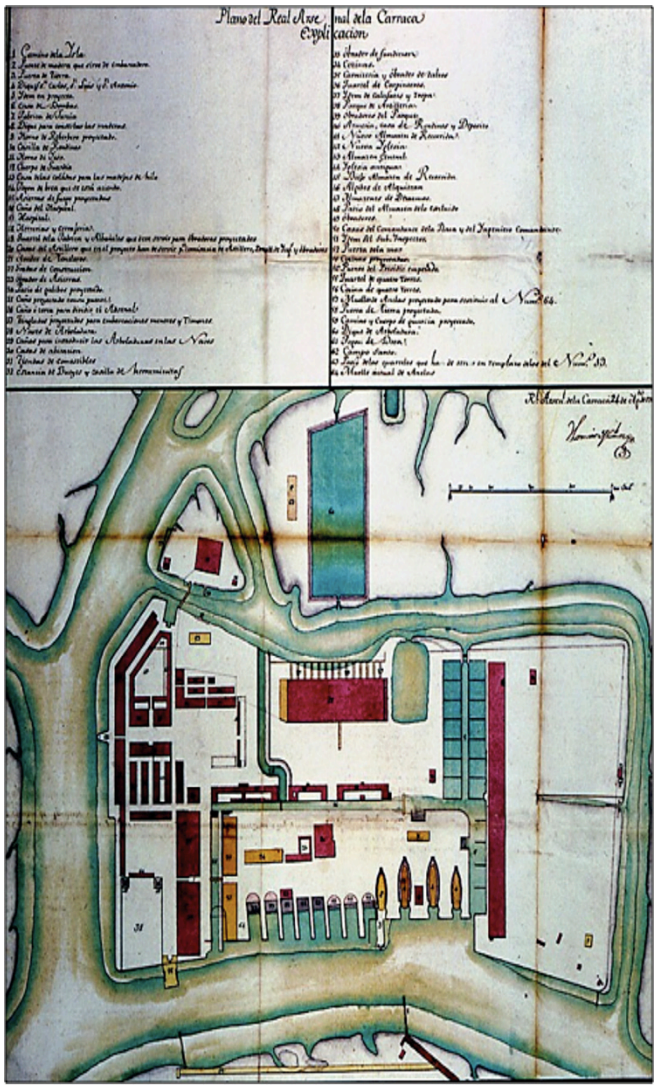


Fig. 1 Map of Isla de Leon, 1803 (Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid)

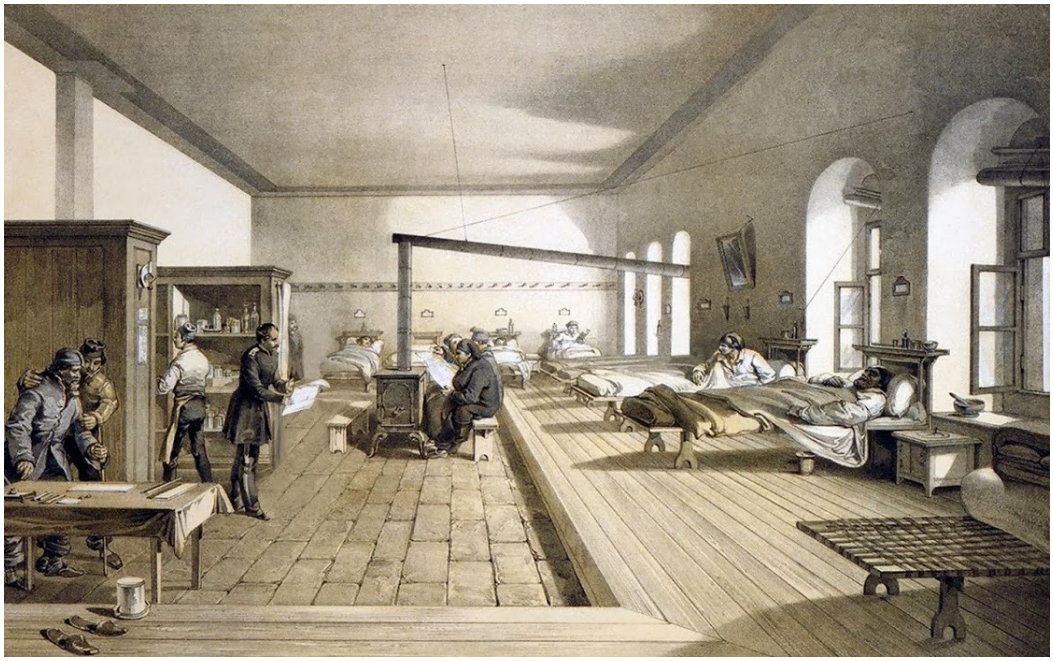


Fig. 2 Military hospital of Segunda Aguada, c. 1820

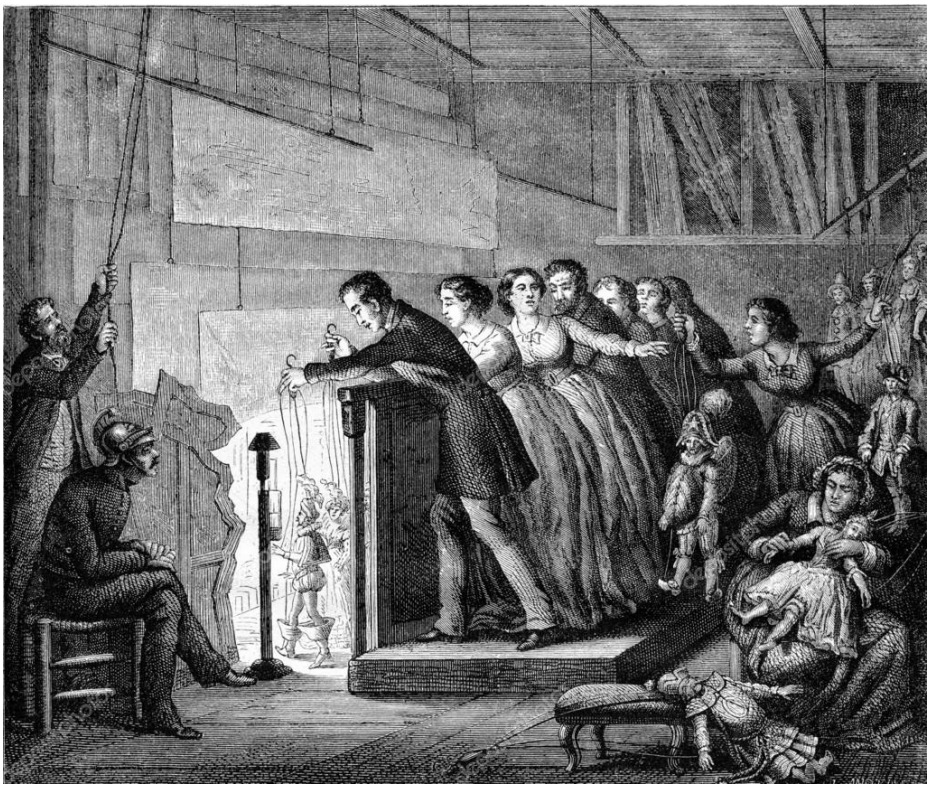


Fig. 3 *Backstage at Théâtre Séraphin*, engraving by E. Lorsay, c. 1840

Fig. 4 Jacques Callot, *The Temptations of St. Anthony*, 1635 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Fig. 5 Plate taken from 'La tentation de Saint Antoine: représentée pour la premiere fois à Versailles, le 7 novembre 1791' in *Le Séraphin de l'enfance: recueil de pièces d'ombres chinoises, dédiées à la jeunesse* printed in Paris, 1843 (Gallica)

Fig. 6 François Goya, *Auto Da Fé of the Inquisition*, 1812 (Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid)

Fig. 7 Napoleonic *ombres chinoises* (Museum of Precinema, Padua, Italy)

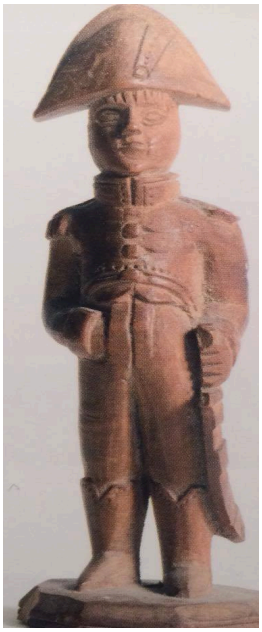


Fig. 8 Napoleon carved figure (Archaeological Museum, Cabrera)

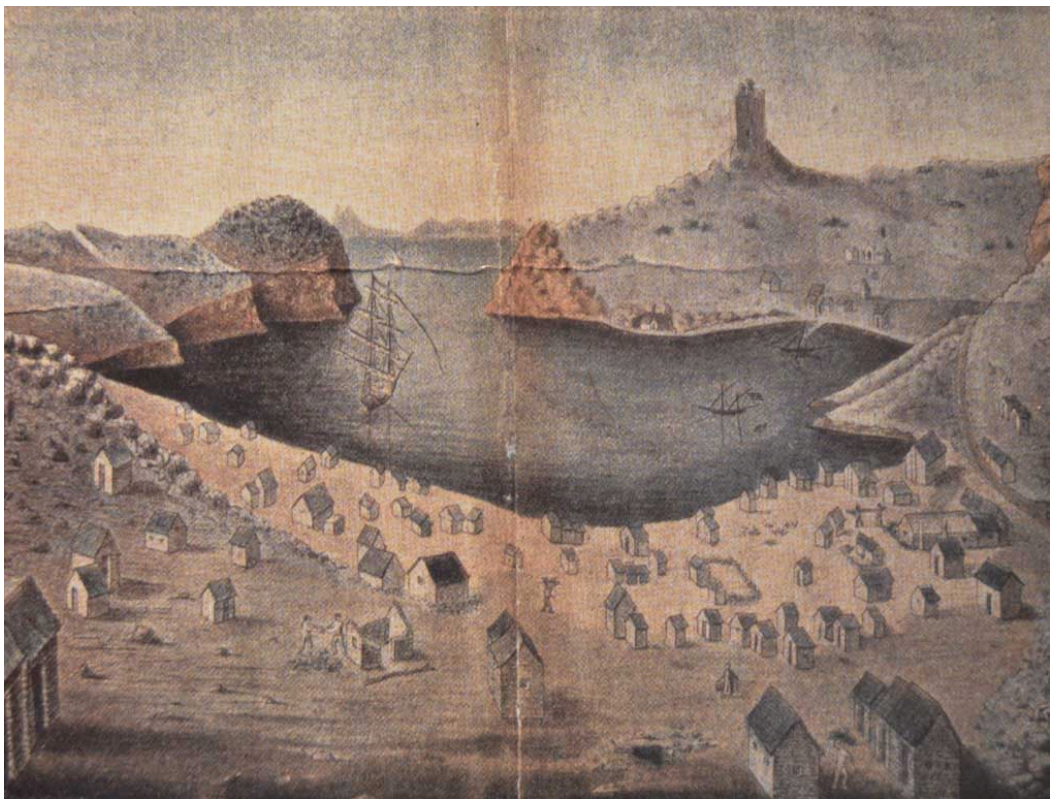


Fig. 9 *Cabrera*, painted by Louis-François Gille, published in 1863 (Gallica)

Fig. 10 Letetaire, Prisoners on Cabrera, c. 1810

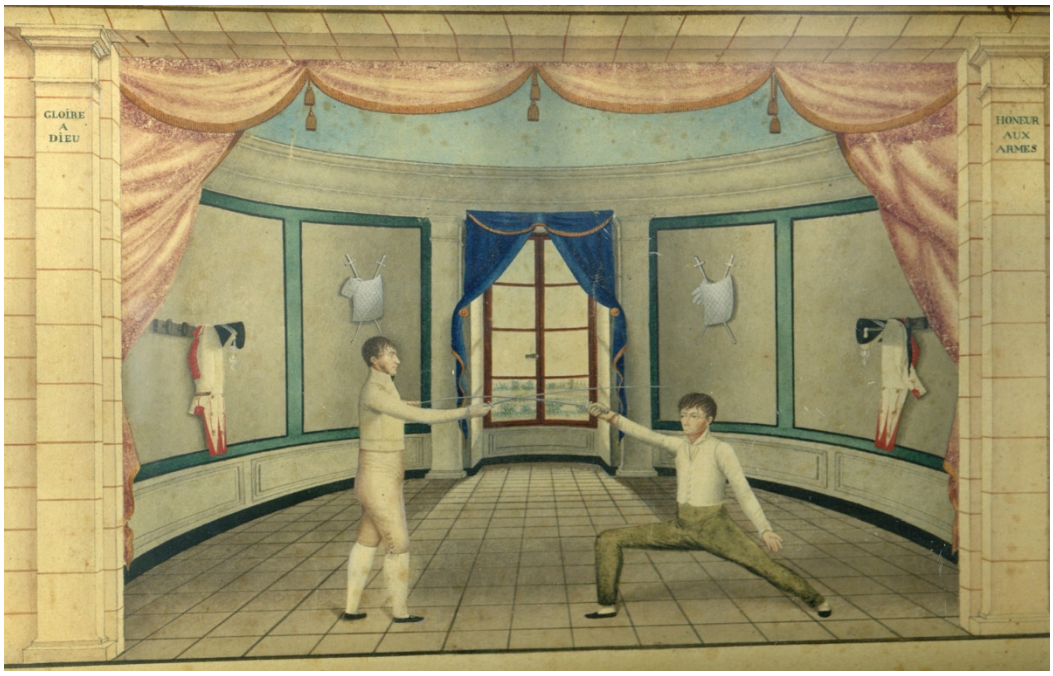


Fig. 11 Etching of a fencing match at Portchester Castle, c. 1810-1814 (English Heritage)

Fig. 12 Misé-en-scene from the Opéra-Comique, 1817 (Archives Nationales, Paris)

Fig. 13 Jean-Baptiste Raguenet, *A View of Paris from the Pont Neuf*, 1763 (Getty Museum)

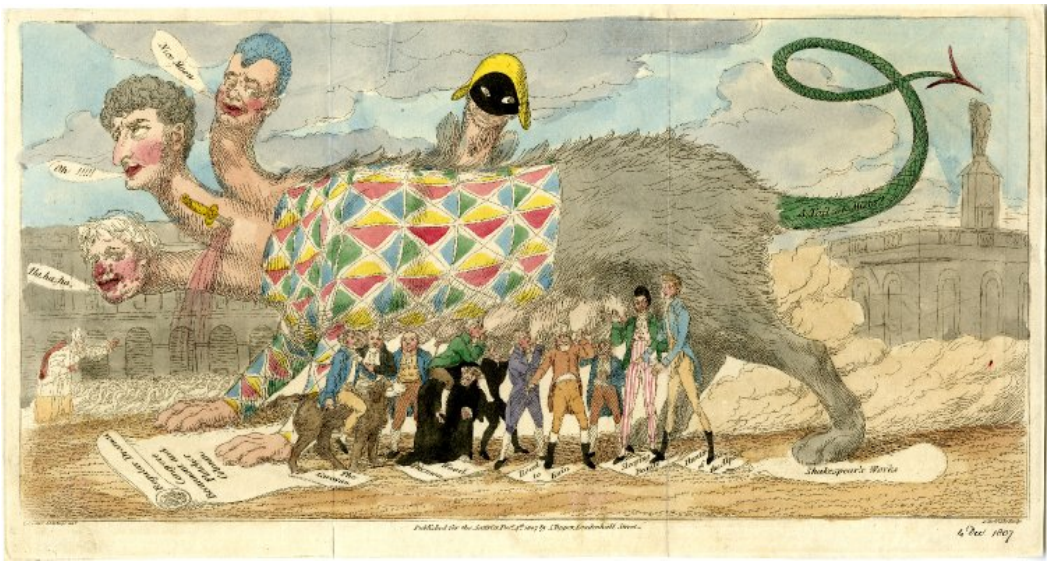
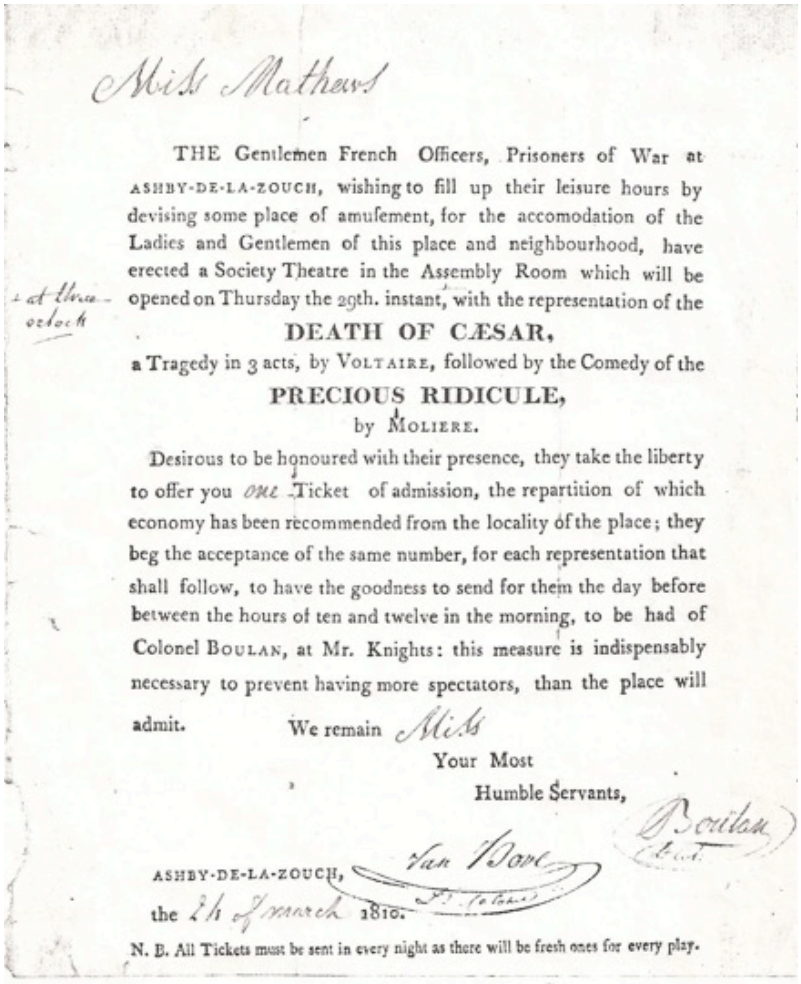


Fig. 14 'Monster Melo-Drame' satirical print, *The Satirist, or, Monthly Meteor,* January 1808

Fig. 15 Captain Durrant, Market outside Portchester Castle, c. 1812-15 (Hampshire Archives, Winchester, Hants)

Fig. 16 Phiz, 'An impression of Portsmouth Theatre' in Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickelby*, 1838-39

Fig. 17 Portsmouth Theatre Royal in James Winston, *The Theatrical Tourist*, 1805



Miss Mathews

THE Gentlemen French Officers, Prisoners of War at ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH, wishing to fill up their leisure hours by devising some place of amuſement, for the accomodation of the Ladies and Gentlemen of this place and neighbourhood, have erected a Society Theatre in the Assembly Room which will be opened on Thursday the 29th. instant, with the representation of the

at three o'clock

DEATH OF CÆSAR,

a Tragedy in 3 acts, by VOLTAIRE, followed by the Comedy of the

PRECIOUS RIDICULE,

by MOLIERE.

Desirous to be honoured with their presence, they take the liberty to offer you one Ticket of admission, the repartition of which economy has been recommended from the locality of the place; they beg the acceptance of the same number, for each representation that shall follow, to have the goodness to send for them the day before between the hours of ten and twelve in the morning, to be had of Colonel BOULAN, at Mr. Knights: this measure is indispensably necessary to prevent having more spectators, than the place will admit.

We remain Miss

Your Most

Humble Servants,

Boulan

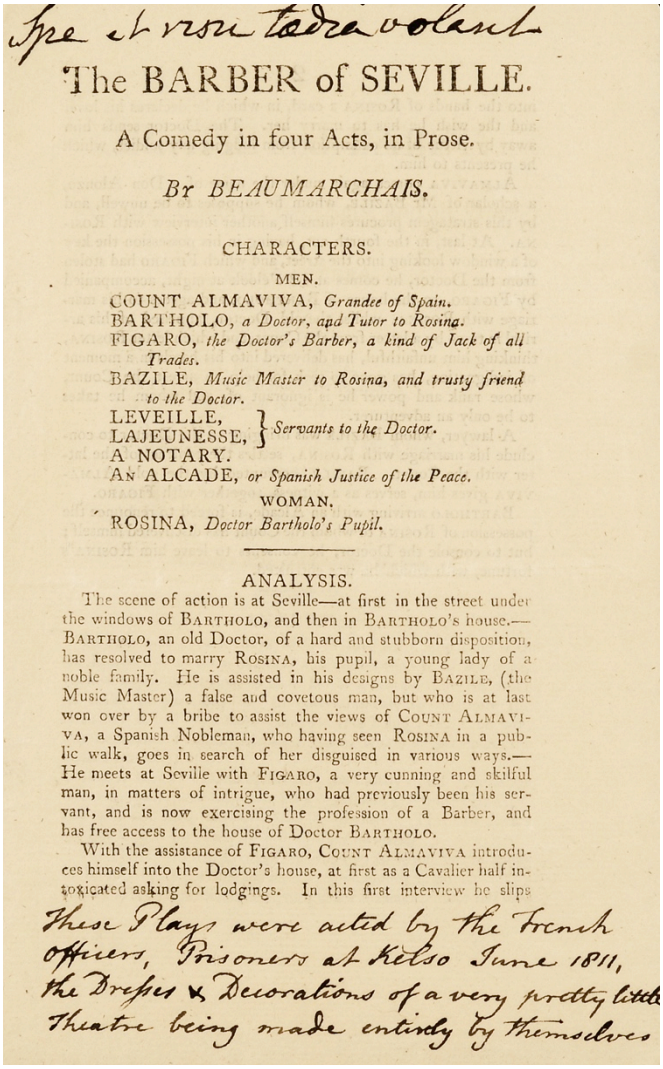
Van Dorn

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH,

the 2th of march 1810.

N. B. All Tickets must be sent in every night as there will be fresh ones for every play.

Fig. 18 Playbill from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 1810 (Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum)



The BARBER of SEVILLE.

A Comedy in four Acts, in Prose.

By BEAUMARCHAIS.

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

COUNT ALMAVIVA, *Grandee of Spain.*
BARTHOLO, *a Doctor, and Tutor to Rosina.*
FIGARO, *the Doctor's Barber, a kind of Jack of all Trades.*
BAZILE, *Music Master to Rosina, and trusty friend to the Doctor.*
LEVEILLE, LAJEUNESSE, } *Servants to the Doctor.*
A NOTARY.
AN ALCADE, *or Spanish Justice of the Peace.*

WOMAN.

ROSINA, *Doctor Bartholo's Pupil.*

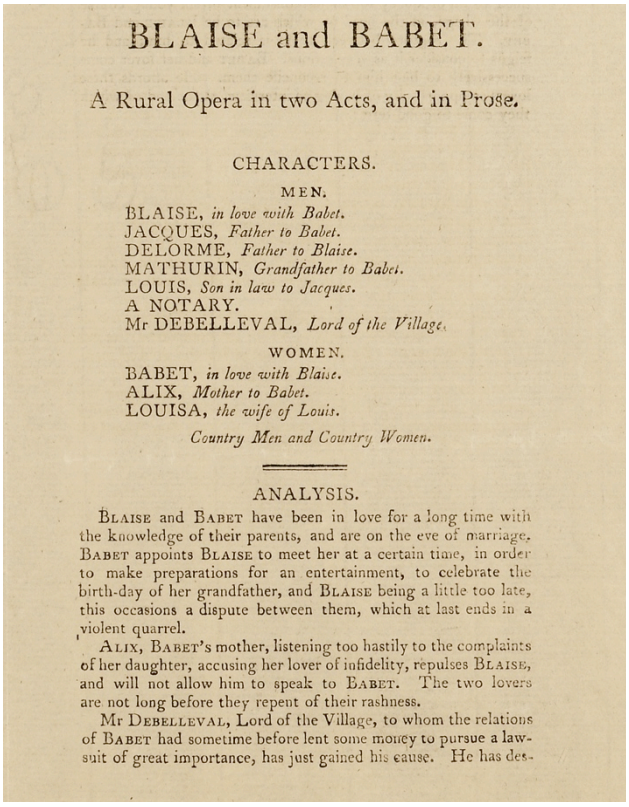
ANALYSIS.

The scene of action is at Seville—at first in the street under the windows of BARTHOLO, and then in BARTHOLO's house.—BARTHOLO, an old Doctor, of a hard and stubborn disposition, has resolved to marry ROSINA, his pupil, a young lady of a noble family. He is assisted in his designs by BAZILE, (the Music Master) a false and covetous man, but who is at last won over by a bribe to assist the views of COUNT ALMAVIVA, a Spanish Nobleman, who having seen ROSINA in a public walk, goes in search of her disguised in various ways.—He meets at Seville with FIGARO, a very cunning and skilful man, in matters of intrigue, who had previously been his servant, and is now exercising the profession of a Barber, and has free access to the house of Doctor BARTHOLO.

With the assistance of FIGARO, COUNT ALMAVIVA introduces himself into the Doctor's house, at first as a Cavalier half intoxicated asking for lodgings. In this first interview he slips

These Plays were acted by the French Officers, Prisoners at Kelso June 1811, the Dresses & Decorations of a very pretty little Theatre being made entirely by themselves

Fig. 19 Playbill for *The Barber of Seville*, Kelso Theatre, 1813 (National Archives Scotland, Edinburgh)



BLAISE and BABET.

A Rural Opera in two Acts, and in Prose.

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

BLAISE, *in love with Babet.*
JACQUES, *Father to Babet.*
DELORME, *Father to Blaise.*
MATHURIN, *Grandfather to Babet.*
LOUIS, *Son in law to Jacques.*
A NOTARY.
Mr DEBELLEVAL, *Lord of the Village.*

WOMEN.

BABET, *in love with Blaise.*
ALIX, *Mother to Babet.*
LOUISA, *the wife of Louis.*

Country Men and Country Women.

ANALYSIS.

BLAISE and BABET have been in love for a long time with the knowledge of their parents, and are on the eve of marriage. BABET appoints BLAISE to meet her at a certain time, in order to make preparations for an entertainment, to celebrate the birth-day of her grandfather, and BLAISE being a little too late, this occasions a dispute between them, which at last ends in a violent quarrel.

ALIX, BABET's mother, listening too hastily to the complaints of her daughter, accusing her lover of infidelity, repulses BLAISE, and will not allow him to speak to BABET. The two lovers are not long before they repent of their rashness.

Mr DEBELLEVAL, Lord of the Village, to whom the relations of BABET had sometime before lent some money to pursue a law-suit of great importance, has just gained his cause. He has des-

Fig. 20 Playbill for *Blaise and Babet*, Kelso Theatre, 1813 (National Archives Scotland, Edinburgh)

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Henri Ducor's description of marionnette performances on the Isla de Leon[103]

Puis on monta des spectacles. Nous eûmes d'abord les Ombres chinoises: le fameux magicien Rotomago y figurait comme de coutume ; mais ce n'était plus le Rotomago des enfants, tel qu'on le voit chez Séraphin. Il était tantôt roi, tantôt pape, et par la vertu de sa baguette s'opéraient des métamorphoses de l'espèce humaine en chambellans, en pages, en hérauts d'armes, en ducs, en comtes, en marquis, en soldats.

Rotomago pape faisait des rois, des cardinaux, des archevêques, des évêques, et tous les ordres de moines mâles et femelles, qui apparaissaient successivement dans leur costume et avec leurs attributs les plus grotesques. La Tentation de Saint Antoine était le sujet burlesque par excellence du répertoire ; les imaginations de Callot y étaient surpassées par des imaginations plus plaisantes encore. Ces souvenirs de la patrie, que, loin de leur pays, les Français aiment tant à se retracer, se trouvaient dans les feux pyriques, qui dessinaient la perspective des principaux monuments de la France.

Les *Fantoccini* se reproduisirent à leur tour, et nous pûmes assister au drame des *marionnettes*, dont le directeur était un sous aide-major de régiment, devenu aujourd'hui l'un des médecins les plus distingués. C'était lui qui composait les pièces que l'on représentait devant nous, et dans lesquelles Polichinelle était presque toujours l'acteur le plus comique et le plus goûté.

Le spirituel docteur prétendait avec raison qu'en égayant ses compagnons d'infortune, il restait fidèle à sa mission, qui était de contribuer à leur santé : il faisait la médecine de l'esprit, qui souvent est si salutaire pour le corps.

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[103] Source: Henri Ducor, *Aventures d'un marin de la Garde impériale, prisonnier de guerre sur les pontons espagnols, dans l'île de Cabrèra et en Russie* (Paris: 1833), pages 138-49] (all italics included from original text).

On ne se figure pas les gros rires que faisaient éclater les réponses et les gambades de Polichinelle amené devant le saint tribunal de l'inquisition ! Et comme il était couvert d'applaudissements, lorsqu'après avoir rossé Arlequin familier, son dénonciateur, et dispersé à grands coups de pieds la procession de l'auto-da-fé, il jouait ses juges à tête ou pile; lorsque s'étant placé à califourchon sur le tas pyramidal qu'il en avait formé au-dessus du bûcher, il entonnait, dans cette attitude triomphale, son chant de victoire, dont le refrain, calembours, ou allusion, était, *ah ! Quelle pile!* Aussitôt accourait le diable qui voulait tout emporter, et une troupe de Dominicains qui cherchaient à s'emparer de Polichinelle. Mais des tambours battaient la charge ; de tous côtés, des bataillons français, baïonnette en avant, se précipitaient sur la scène, le Diable et les Dominicains ne savaient plus où se cacher : Polichinelle était délivré à la satisfaction générale.

Les Espagnols se livraient à la joie, les danses commençaient, et dans le fond du théâtre on apercevait en transparent, au milieu d'une auréole de gloire, la figure de Napoléon assis dans un char que guidait le génie de la civilisation, son flambeau à la main.

Polichinelle devant l'inquisition faisait fureur : il eut je ne sais plus combien de représentations consécutives. On donna ensuite *le Maniaque supposé, ou le Déluge universel*, hydrolico-tragi-comédie-parade, avec tableaux, ouvertures et changements décors à vue. Cette fois, l'intrigue était plus compliquée, et je serais fort embarrassé d'en faire une complète analyse. N'importe, je vais essayer de donner une idée de cette production tout-à-fait originale.

L'orchestre exécutait une cacophonie des plus bizarres ; c'était un mélange de motifs facétieusement tristes, ou d'une jovialité des plus triviales. Pendant cette baroque ouverture, derrière la toile on entendait des chants d'ivrogne, de voix aiguës de querelleurs, et tout l'affreux vacarme d'une rixe de cabaret. Le rideau se levait, et les spectateurs avaient sous les yeux le désordre d'une orgie de guinguette ; des filles, des sacrépans, des pompiers, des faubouriens, des soldats de la garde de Paris, verts et rouges, des tables brisées,

des tabourets renversés, des coups de poings, des bouteilles lancées, et de lubriques horreurs que n'interrompait point ce tapage.

Sur la droite se voyaient des saltimbanques, des bateliers, et des banquistes de toute espèce, menant grand bruit sur leurs tréteaux : on y annonçait avec emphase et avec des détails à pouffer, la galerie de figures en cire du célèbre Curtius; une ménagerie d'animaux rares et curieux; et pour cette fois seulement, à la demande du public, une représentation extraordinaire de *gli Pupi napolitani*. Tout cela se passait non loin des hauteurs de Montmartre, entre deux moulins à vent; et tout près du télégraphe on découvrait un énorme bateau en construction.

C'était l'arc de Noé. Après divers incidents, plus ou moins comiques, car nous ne devions pas nous montrer très-difficiles, le déluge commençait, la barque voguait, et quand la noyade était terminée venait le dénouement. Une fille de Noé avait sauvé son amant, fils d'un maréchal ferrant, et cet amant avait sauvé son père. L'arc-en-ciel paraissait, et) en suivant sa courbe, sous les traits de Mercure, un commissaire que les gens de la guinguette avaient auparavant berné à outrance, revenait tenant à la main un immense baromètre, dont l'aiguille était sur ces mots, écrits en gros caractères : *Beau fixe*.

Ce n'était là qu'une débauche d'esprit, mais nous avions besoin de ce gros sel pour faire diversion à de pénibles pensées. Les impressions qu'il produisait étaient si heureuses, qu'aujourd'hui je me rappelle encore le dialogue de cette pièce comme si j'y étais. La scène finale peut être un échantillon des facéties qui excitaient notre gaîté. Je la place ici comme la seule halte qui ne soit pas sérieuse, au milieu de ces pages, où de longtemps je n'aurai que de tristes réminiscences à offrir.

— Mon maître, disait en arrivant le commissaire, est satisfait de voir qu'il y a encore de la vertu sur la terre ; il a été touché de l'action d'un bon fils, et, en faveur de ce dévouement) il pardonne à tout le genre humain.

—Mais on fait queue à la Morgue, observait Noé; il n'y a plus de place dans les filets de Saint-Cloud, tout le monde est noyé.

—En vérité?

—C’est comme je me fais l’honneur de vous le dire.

— C’est égal; célébrons la clémence de mon doux maître. Vite un ballet! Il nous faut un ballet !

—Que ne demandez-vous plutôt une résurrection !

—Est-ce que par hasard nos danseuses de l’Opéra auraient péri?

— Elles sont toutes à fond.

Arlequin, qui s’était glissé furtivement dans l’arche, et qui, pendant la bourrasque, s’était tenu tapi dans un coin, en sortait avec ses marionnettes.

—Eh bien ! Eh bien! Que vois-je ? S’écriait Mercure avec surprise, que vois-je? Le directeur des pupi-napolitani ! Des *Fantoccini*! Reprenait-il. Voilà justement notre affaire: allons, dansez, amusez-vous. Cependant, une minute, papa Noé; une noce, deux noces n’ont jamais rien gâté : nous marierons le fils du maréchal avec votre cadette) cette jolie blonde, et ce gaillard-là, en montrant Arlequin, avec la plus brune de vos filles; ils nous feront des petits négrillons, car des nègres il en faut ; il nous faut du sucre, c’est toujours une douceur.

Noé donnait son consentement.

Au même instant on entendait la voix de Polichinelle, qui, s’étant sauvé dans un de ses sabots, faisait en dansant sa bruyante entrée.

Je me suis conservé, disait-il, pour perpétuer la race des bossus.

— Ah! Oui, la race des bossus, répétait Je commissaire; on n’y avait pas songé. Papa Noé, s’il vous reste une fille, il se présente un troisième parti.

Fi donc ! Se récriait une petite mijaurée ; je veux un mari plus droit que monsieur.

— Il n’y en a plus, objectait Mercure; vous le prendrez, ou.

— En ce cas, je l’accepte, disait-elle ; mais, allez, c’est bien malgré moi.

Et elle donnait sa main à Polichinelle, qui s’efforçait de la consoler.

— Sois tranquille, lui disait-il, je ferai en sorte de me redresser, et de te rendre heureuse, s’il ne faut que cela.

Mercure donnait le signal de la danse, et aussitôt toutes les marionnettes de sauter.

Le ballet se terminait par un menuet de Cassandre et de la mère Gigogne, dont les jupes, comme on sait, sont la véritable arche de Noé: il en sortait une

population tout entière. Alors Polichinelle, sur le devant de la scène, et après les trois saluts d'usage, faisait ainsi son compliment :

'Messieurs, témoins de l'inépuisable fécondité du cotillon de madame, vous traiterez peut - être encore de folie l'entreprise du papa beau-père; mais je dois vous avertir que notre bateau nous servira, nous y tiendrons l'auberge de la Galiote, ou, si vous le préférez, du Sabot- Navigateur. Vous y trouverez toujours du goujon frit et de la matelote; venez-y, et si vous êtes satisfaits, il n'y a pas de carte à payer ; l'honneur de votre présence, et nous ne demandons rien de plus.» Des bravos et des applaudissements à tout rompre, couvraient ces derniers lazzis, et le rideau tombait.

Appendix B

List of 'sociétaires' at Portchester Castle[104]

Primary Actors

Name	Regiment	Role
BELIN DE BALU	Sergent, corps d'artillerie	Tyran
BRATAN	Sergent, 2e régiment	Régisseur/premier comique
DE SINTOS	Matelot [Sailor]	Chef des figurans, confident
DEFACQZ	Fourrier, 15e régiment	Jeune premier
GRUENTGENTZ	Sergent, 1er régiment	Les mères
LAFONTAINE	Sergent, 12e régiment	Premier rôle
MONTLEBERT	Matelot	Receveur
MOREAU	Caporal, 1er régiment	Dessinateur, Colin
PALLUEL	Fourrier, 2e régiment	Contrôleur, bas comique
REVERDY	Sergent de grenadiers	Caissier, père noble
SUTAT	Maréchal-de-logis	Premier rôle en femme
WAUTHIER	Caporal, 4e régiment	Soubrette

Amateurs

Name	Regiment	Role
BANCELIN	Fourrier, 4e régiment	Jeune premier
GERBAUX	Trompette de dragons	Les vieilles
GILLE	Fourrier, 2e régiment	Fleuriste, jeune premier
JEAN	Chasseur à cheval	Confiant
QUANTIN	Fourrier, 121e régiment	Copiste, page ingénu
VIVIAND	Sergent	Deuxième premier rôle

[104] Source: Joseph Quantin, *Trois ans de séjour en Espagne, Volume II* (Paris: J. Brianchon, 1823), pp. 149-55.

Musiciens[105]

Name	Regiment	Role
CORRET	Musicien, 1er régiment	Chef d'orchestre
GOURDE	Caporal de grenadiers	Premier violon
LOUIS	Musicien	Première clarinette
GRAPIN	Sergent-major	Deuxième clarinette
MERCIER	Fourrier de grenadier	Troisième clarinette
CUVELI	Musicien de la marine	Première flute
ROCARD	Soldat, 2e régiment	Deuxième flute
BODARD	Soldat, 2e régiment	Cor, timbale

Danseurs[106]

Name	Regiment	Role
THENARD	Dragon, 10e régiment	Maitre de danse
JOAN	Chasseur à cheval	Premier danseur

Employés[107]

Name	Regiment	Role
CARRÉ	Soldat	Machiniste [Machinist]
HAMIN	Marine	Directeur [Director]
MANGO	Soldat, 2e régiment	Perruquier [Wigmaker]
MONTÉ	Soldat, 2e régiment	Lampiste [Lamplighter]
PALTIER	Soldat, 1er régiment	Receveur de marques
RECEVEUR	Soldat, 2e régiment	Menuisier [Carpenter]

[105] Quantin notes that there are 'quatre violons; en tout douze musiciens' ['four violins; in total twelve musicians'].
[106] Quantin notes that there are 'six danseurs; vingt figurans' ['six dancers; twenty extra']
[107] Quantin notes that 'Le théâtre de Portchester employait en tout soixante-sept personnes' ['The theatre at Portchester employe a total of sixty-six people'].

Appendix C

Portchester Castle Repertoire

Abbreviations:

Genres:

Com	Comedy
DR	Drame
MD	Melodrama
OC	Opera comique
Pant	Pantomime
PR	Parade
TR	Tragedy
Vaud	Vaudeville

Theatres:

AC	Ambigu-Comique
CF	Comédie-Française
JA	Théâtre des Jeune Artistes
MV	Théâtre Montansier-Varietes
OC	Opéra-Comique
PC	Portchester Castle
TP	Théâtre de l'Estrapade au Pantheon
TT	Théâtre des Troubadours
TV	Théâtre des Variétés
Vaud	Théâtre du Vaudeville

Plays performed at Théâtre des Variétés, Portchester Castle (1810-1814)[108]

Title	Genre	Author(s)	Year	Thtr	Ref
Les folies amoureuses	Com	Regnard	1704	CF	Q
Le barbier de Séville	Com	Beaumarchais	1775	CF	Q/V&A
Defiance et malice	Com	Dieulafoy	1801	CF	Q
Le tyran domestique	Com	Duval	1805	CF	Q
Les deux gendres	Com	Etienne	1810	CF	Q
Eugénie	DR	Beaumarchais	1767	Gaîté	Q
Les Deux Amis	DR	Beaumarchais	1770	TP	Q
Robert, chef de brigands	DR	La Martelière	1792	Gaîté	Q
Le Petit Chaperon rouge	Féerie	Blanchard	1800	Gaîté	G, p. 267
Le Petit Poucet	Féerie	Hapdé & Cuvelier	1800	JA	G, p. 270
La Clochette	Féerie				G, p. 267
C'est le Diable ou la Bohémienne	Mêlé	Cuvelier	1797	AC	G, p. 270
Victor, ou l'enfant de la forêt [Victor, or the Child of the Forest]	MD	Pixérécourt	1798	AC	V&A
La Forét périlleuse [The Perilous Forest]	MD	Loaisel de Tréogate	1800	AC	V&A
Cœlina, ou l'Enfant du mystère [Cœlina, or the Child of Mystery]	MD	Pixérécourt	1800	AC	V&A
La Femme à deux maris [The Wife of Two Husbands]	MD	Pixérécourt	1802	AC	V&A
Les chevaliers du lion [The	MD	Madame de Bawr	1804	AC	V&A

[108] Source: Joseph Quantin, *Trois Ans de Séjour En Espagne, Dans L'intérieur Du Pays, Sur Les Pontons , à Cadix , et Dans L'île de Cabrera, Volume II* (Paris: J. Brianchon, 1823), pp. 147-48 [referenced as 'Q']; V&A: Playbills, THM /415/2/18 [referenced as 'V&A']; and, Philippe Gille, *Les prisonniers de Cabrera: Memoires d'un conscript de 1808* (Paris: Victor-Havard, 1863), pp. 267, 270 [references as 'G'].

Title	Genre	Author(s)	Year	Thtr	Ref
Knight of the Lion]					
Roséliska, ou Amour, Haine et Vengeance	MD	Lafontaine	1810	PC	V&A
Pierre-le-Grand	OC	Grétry; Bouilly (libretto)	1790	OC	Q
Adolphe et Clara, ou Les Deux prisonniers	OC	Marsollier; Dalayrac (libretto)	1799	OC	Q
Les Deux Journées	OC	Cherubini; Bouilly (libretto)	1800	OC	Q
Françoise de Foix	OC	Montan-Berton; Bouilly & Mercier-Dupaty (libretto)	1809	OC	Q
The Enchanted Ring	Panto	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Golden Apple	Panto	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
Drelindindin, ou le Carillonneur de la Samaritaine [*Delindrin, or the Ringer of the Samaritan*]	PR	Henrion and Servières	1802	TC	V&A
Zaïre	TR	Voltaire	1732	CF	Q
Mahomet	TR	Voltaire	1742	CF	Q
Les Templiers	TR	Raynouard	1805	CF	Q
The Furies of Love (one act)	TR	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
Vadé à la Grenouillère	Vaud	G. Duval & Gouffé	1799	TT	Q
Le Billet de Logement	Vaud	Léger	1799	TT	Q
M. Guillaume	Vaud	Radet, Barré, Destontaines, Bourgueil	1800	Vaud	Q/V&A
Fanchon la Vieilleuse	Vaud	Pain & Bouilly	1803	Vaud	Q

Title	Genre	Author(s)	Year	Thtr	Ref
Le Bouffe et le Taileur [The Buffoon and the Tailor]	Vaud	Villiers & Gouffé; Gaveaux (libretto)	1804	MV	Q/V&A
La Leçon de Botanique [*The Botanic Lesson*]	Vaud	Dupaty	1804	TV	Q/V&A
Les Chevilles de maître Adam [*The Pegs of Master Adam*]	Vaud	Francis; Moreau	1805	MV	Q/V&A
M. Vautour	Vaud	Desaugiers, Duval & Tournay	1805	MV	Q/V&A
La Féte de Lise [*The Birthday of Lise*]	Vaud	Unknown	1805		Q/V&A
La laitière prussienne [The Prussian Milkmaid]	Vaud	Gabiot	1805	AC	V&A
Le galant savetier [*The Gallant Cobbler*]	Vaud	Saint-Firmin	1805	PV	V&A
Le Piége	Vaud	Théaulon	1812	TV	Q
Le Château d'If	Vaud	Ménissier, Théaulon, & Moreau	1813	MV	Q
L'Heureuse Etoudourie	Vaud	Quantin	??	PC	Q
Let Us Try	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Supposed Enlisting	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Bossomanie, or Hunchbacks Forever	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Novice	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Parachute	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Cossard	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Mistake	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
Les Deux Martines [*The Two Martines*]	Vaud	Ducray-Duminil	1786	PC	V&A

Title	Genre	Author(s)	Year	Thtr	Ref
The Recruit	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Buffet	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A
The Wooden Sword	Vaud	Unknown	1810	PC	V&A

Playbills for Portchester Castle in V&A Archives[109]

[Friday, 21st September 1810]
Let Us Try: vaudeville in one act
The Billeting: vaudeville one act
Cœlina or the Child of Mystery: melodrama in three acts

[Monday, 24th September 1810]
The birthday of Lise
Bossomanie
The Gallant Cobbler

[Monday 1st October 1810]
The Furies of Love: A Tragedy
The Perilous Forests: A Melodrama in three acts
The Bossomanie: Vaudeville

[Monday, 8th October 1810]
The Buffet: Vaudeville in one act
The Billeting: Vaudeville one act
The Wooden Sword: A Pantomime in two acts
The Gallant Cobbler: Vaudeville in the Billingsgate-style

[Friday, 12th October 1810]
The Wife with Two Husbands
The Supposed Enlisting: Vaudeville in one act

[Friday, 19th October 1810]
The Furies of Love: A Tragedy in one act
The Wife with Two Husbands: A Melodrama

[109] Source: V&A Playbills, THM /415/2/18

M. Vautour

[Monday, 22 October 1810]
The Perilous Forests: A Melodrama in 3 Acts
The Botany Lessons: Vaudeville in 2 Acts

[Thursday, 25th October 1810—for jubilee[110]]
Barber of Seville
Delindrin, or the Ringer of the Samaritan: Vaudeville

[Monday, 29th October 1810]
M. Vautour, or the Proprietor Under Seal: Vaudeville in one act
The Two Martines: A Comedy
The Recruit: Vaudeville in one act
The Pegs of M. Adam: Vaudeville in one act

[Friday, 2nd November 1810]
Roseliska: A melodrama in three acts (with new scenery and decorations)
The Bossomanie, or Hunchbacks For Ever: Vaudeville in one act

[Wednesday, 7th November 1810]
The Barber of Seville: A comedy in four acts
The Pegs of M. Adam: Vaudeville in one act

[Friday, 9th November 1810]
Cœlina, or the child of mystery: A melodrama in three acts
The Birthday of Lise: Vaudeville in two acts

[Friday, 16th November 1810]
The Botanique Lesson: Vaudeville in two acts
M. William: A comedy in two acts

[110] Jubilee for King George III—25th October 1810

The Prussian Milkmaid: Vaudeville in one act (12 o'clock start)

[Monday, 3rd December 1810]
The Buffoon and the Taylor
The Cossard: Vaudeville in one act
The Mysterious Ring, or the Folly's of [blank] *with dance pantomime in two acts*

[Monday, 10th December 1810]
The Knight of the Lion: Melodrama in three acts with new music of Mr. Corret
The Supposed Listing: Vaudeville in one act

[Friday, 14 December 1810]
The Prussian Milkmaid: A comedy in one act
Victor, or the Child of the Forest: A melodrama in three acts
The Parachute: Vaudeville in one act

[Monday, 17 December 1810]
The Enchanted Ring: A pantomime in two acts
The Novice: Vaudeville in one act
The Cossard: Vaudeville in one act

[To begin at 10 o'clock precisely on Friday, 5th January 1811]
The Mistake: A Comedy in one act
The Genteel Cobbler: Vaudeville in one act to which will be added *The Golden Apple: Pantomime in three acts*

APPENDIX D

Selkirk Subscription Library Registers

AUTHOR	TITLE	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	SURNAME
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	July	1	Faige, de la
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	July	1	Messager
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	September	16	Passement
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	October	28	Chauvin
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	November	18	Chauvin
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1812	December	16	Chauvin
Baillie, Joanna	*Plays*	1813	May	12	Trebou
Bell	*Works*	1812	June	17	Tourat
Bell	*Works*	1812	June	17	Tourat
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	February	22	Guitard, de
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	February	22	Le Gendre
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	March	7	Le Gendre
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	March	14	Le Gendre
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	June	9	Tourat
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	1	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	1	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Jatriel
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	September	26	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1812	October	21	Messager
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	April	21	Chauvin
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	May	6	Liébray
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	September	15	Magnier
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	November	17	Besancele

AUTHOR	TITLE	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	SURNAME
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	November	17	Tarnier
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	November	17	Tarnier
Cibber, Colley	*Plays*	1813	December	2	Tarnier
Congreve	*Works*	1812	January	28	Bouvet
Congreve	*Works*	1812	July	29	Jatriel
Congreve	*Works*	1812	September	26	Pean
Congreve	*Works*	1813	June	30	Doissy
Congreve	*Works*	1813	July	28	Liébray
Congreve	*Works*	1813	August	15	Tarnier
Congreve	*Works*	1814	March	23	Bonneval
Dryden	*Plays*	1812	March	14	Tourat
Dryden	*Plays*	1812	April	1	Tourat
Dryden	*Plays*	1812	April	4	Tourat
Dryden	*Plays*	1812	September	26	Frossard
Dryden	*Plays*	1814	January	12	Frossard
Farquhar, George	*Plays*	1812	May	6	Tourat
Farquhar, George	*Plays*	1812	September	26	Messager
Farquhar, George	*Plays*	1813	August	4	Charant
Farquhar, George	*Plays*	1813	December	22	Jatriel
Foote	*Plays*	1812	April	22	Jatriel
Foote	*Plays*	1813	June	30	Guyot
Foote	*Plays*	1814	March	2	Tourat
Gay	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Faige, de la
Gay	*Plays*	1813	September	7	Jatriel
Moliere	*Plays*	1811	May	19	Faige, de la
Moliere	*Plays*	1811	May	22	Graffan
Moliere	*Plays*	1811	May	29	Graffan
Moliere	*Plays*	1811	June	12	Graffan
Moliere	*Works*	1811	July	24	Tarnier
Moliere	*Works*	1812	June	9	Doissy

AUTHOR	TITLE	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	SURNAME
Moliere	*Works*	1812	September	26	Maufras
Moliere	*Works*	1812	September	26	Maufras
Moliere	*Plays*	1812	October	21	Trebou
Moliere	*Plays*	1813	June	30	Guyot
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	March	7	Guitard, de
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	May	20	Tourat
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	June	9	Tourat
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	July	1	Messager
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Frossard
Vanbrugh	*Comedies*	1812	July	29	Messager
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	July	29	Simon
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1812	September	26	Messager
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1813	March	24	Boignier
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1813	April	21	Boignier
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1813	April	28	Liébray
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1813	June	30	Doissy
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1813	Janu	27	Chauvin
Vanbrugh	*Plays*	1814	April	13	Magnier

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Article 19, Dossiers A-C, for exchange negotiations

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